

THE
PRINCE
OR
THE ROYAL LIBERTINES.

—
VOL. I.

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PRINCE

OR, THE

ROYAL LIBERTINES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CHAPTER I.

Of the Prince Charles of Milan, his education and Habits—the Libertine displayed—of the Monk Marino—of the Duke of Milan—of the Princess Andreolla and the Princess Gabriella.

In a beautiful palace situated near the romantic lake of Como, in the Milanese territory, whose waters extend between two ranges of mountains, and refresh the scenery of the mulberry and the vine, resided mostly the Prince Charles, of Milan, whose depraved habits and dissolute manners had for a long time distinguished him among the

greatest of the libertines of the dukedom.

The early education of the Prince Charles had been such as endangered his morals, and consequently the enjoyments arising from good principles. It had encouraged him when very young to take those impressions of power, pomp, and pride which only serve to fill the imagination with the false and fatal dreams of unbounded self gratification, without suffering it to yield to one privation, and thus owing to its constant indulgencies the sad results of loss of health, honor, and happiness.

The Prince Charles was naturally of a noble and generous spirit, alive to all the gallant and liberal feelings of the heart; yet he was of a tyrannical and sarcastic temper, exulting in the mistakes, or inadvertencies of those about him, and seeking opportunities of degrading them; his virtue was a passion for munificence, his vices a heap of enormities and lusts, which had so de-

formed his mind that an elegant figure, and the most finished manners were unable to please, with any but the depraved. The admiration which was excited at the presence of the Prince Charles soon yielded to disappointment, and the deportment which had charmed, was dismissed from the contemplation with pain and regret. The Prince Charles was shunned and avoided by every one, and the only epithet by which he was known, was, "*THE ROYAL LIBERTINE!*"

The deportment of the Prince Charles was manly and majestic, and displayed a grandeur that was consistent with his high consideration and rank in life. His tutor, the Monk Marino, had so far done his duty to his prince that he had left no one accomplishment neglected.

The first masters of the sword, the dance, and the music, had been engaged for the royal pupil, who seemed destined to succeed to the dukedom of Milan. He was skilled in the *manége*

of the horse, distinguished in the manly exercises, and a master of the languages of the courts.

The Prince Charles, at an early age, had begun to entertain a licentious appetite for women. No chaste nor moral distinctions had regulated the desires of the Royal Libertine. The Monk Marino had never interfered on those points, his religion was even made subservient to the wishes of the Prince, and to flatter his desires; and the artful priest consented that he should become depraved, in order that he should become weak and easily governed: it was early in life too, that the Prince Charles had begun to indulge in the pleasures of the table, and that he was allowed to know excess, and instructed in all the mysteries of revelry and riot. His palace had become the Court of Cœmus, and the roof echoed nightly with the shouts of unseemingly mirth and discord. The Monk Marino was often of the parties, but the wary priest always contrived to

blame, while he permitted, and thus put his own reputation safe, while he suffered the morals of his pupil to be undermined.

The Monk Marino was of middle stature, his visage formed with considerable expression, his nose aquiline, his eye large, and starting as it were from its orbit, his face ruby, with a countenance that displayed at once acuteness and good nature ; Marino was in the same instant gracious and sarcastic, yet with all the strength of feature which he possessed he could so mould and modify its delineations, that he could appear by turns complacent, considerate, courteous, full of human kindness, and benevolent inquiry. The Monk was a great master of simulation, and possessed the magic of altering the minds of those who came within the circle of his mysteries, as the necromancers of old were said to do, the form of such as were in their power. No man who conversed with Marino could re-

sist his influence, and it was to this magic that he owed his success, for it was not by the purity or integrity of his conduct. The Monk was ambitious, addicted to gaming, to drink, and to women ; he was unprincipled, and insincere, his wit was excellent, his judgment steady and complete, his manners agreeable, his love for his prince arising more than from any thing else in the approbation felt by the depraved for corresponding depravity, pleased with the association, and the addition of another member in the list of libertines.

Of the Duke of Milan little can be said except that he was of quiet and domestic manners and habits, mixing seldom in the affairs of state, leaving the government chiefly to his duchess, and to a minister whose picture will occupy a future page, he might have felt some uneasiness at the libertine conduct of his son, but he was too weak to decide on measures, and too obstinately determined at all events to

abide by the advice of those about him, to judge for himself, even if he had been blessed with great powers of discernment.

The Prince Charles had married the Princess Andreolla, of Placenza, a lady of elegant figure, and of fine expression of countenance, but of free and unre-served manners, full of good nature and candour. The princess had been indis-creet enough to lay herself open, by her ingenuousness, to the intrigues and the cabals of the court of Milan—by the Princess Andreolla the Prince of Milan had a daughter named Gabriella.

The Princess Gabriella was tall, and beautiful in form, and feature, and ele-gant in her deportment. At the age of fourteen she was the admiration of the court ; her mind was generous and sin-cere, like that of the Lady Andreolla her mother ; but she possessed an un-controllable spirit, was at times arro-gant and haughty, but only so when suspicious of contradiction or constraint,

or else she was naturally kind and benevolent, and seemed to promise to become an ornament to a throne ; she was the idol of the prince, her father, who gave full liberty to her inclinations. The Princess Gabriella was permitted to be generous *when*, and *where*, she pleased, and her mandates had the constant sanction of the Royal Signet. It was happy for the subject who could interest in his favor so warm and powerful a friend as the Princess Gabriella.

CHAP. II.

The midnight revels of the Palace of Trezzo, a buffoon is engaged to divert the Prince, named Moscadello, who is both entertained and despised.

THE young nobles of the Court of Milan were most of them desirous of the favor and countenance of the Prince Charles. There were but few of them who were not addicted to the same vices, and some who were even more depraved. The example of the Prince had indeed so much relaxed the morals of the Court, that there were many who gave a loose to their inclinations and became the lewd followers of his licentious habits, and indeed such only were included in the invitations to the Palace of Trezzo, as could take down copious draughts of the Brescian wine, and recount their gallantries with the beauties of Italy.

Many of the number of these nobles were stained with horrid crimes, and had even employed the *stiletto* in their service.

It was not unusual on the nights of revel, at the palace of Trezzo, to see these libertines drinking by the side of a courtezan who had employed the *aqua tufana* against her rival, or had been connected with bravoes in robbery and murder !

Among the chief of the libertines who were the associates of Prince Charles was Montaltus the son of the Count Montorio, and his brother the Monk Muscadus, the first lame, but depraved in manners, and obscene in his conversation. Montaltus was conspicuous for the filthiness and lewdness of his mind, and all the entertainment which he was capable of affording his prince, was the abominable pictures painted by his vile and heated imagination. His brother, the Monk Muscadus, notwithstanding his sacred office, was equally abandoned to all the principles of de-

cency. In the hours of riot and debauchery he even dared to make a mock of his holy religion, and was the scorn and contempt of even the most licentious of his companions.

The most conspicuous of the libertines who remain to be named were Gilulphus, a senator, who disgraced brilliant talents by a want of principle which made it proverbial with him to keep the labourer without his hire, and the infamous Margotus, the ready pimp and pander of the prince, his master.

The Monk Marino had taken care, from among the refuse of the court of Milan to engage a wretched being who imagined himself a wit, but who was really a low buffoon. This creature was named Moscadello, and had borne arms in the service of the Duke, but being both a libertine, and a prodigal had so reduced his circumstances that he became even a dependent for a dinner at the table of the Prince Charles, and tamely submitted to all the liberties

and insults which his master was accustomed to offer to him in the moments of intoxication. It is true that the degraded Moscadello would at times exult in the paltry triumph of a bitter and sarcastic wit which, however, was never used towards the prince without its being remembered, and cruelly retaliated, even personal indignities were sometimes offered, and the unhappy Moscadello paid dearly for the general invitation which he had received to the table of his prince ; he was an example of the wretched situation of those who give up their time for paltry and petty advantages of which they may be deprived at pleasure by the caprice of the donor, leaving them disgraced and without resource.

Often were heard by the inhabitants of the village of Canonica, the nearest to the palace of Trezzo, the horrid din and uproar of that temple of abomination ; and often at midnight were seen the young lords, headed by the Prince

Charles, sallying out drunk and mad, making the peaceful woods and vallies echo with the noise of riot, while the poor cottagers, alarmed from their just and equal repose, felt pity for *greatness*, and laid themselves down again pleased that their lot was to be *safe* and *low*. Even at the palace of the prince, in the city of Milan, the same disgraceful scenes were practised, and the magistracy could not interfere to prevent them, the Prince was superior to their authority, and even the Duke was insensible to the voice of complaint that might disturb his love of repose.

Such was the state of Milan when it was to be visited by a still greater evil; the arrival of a prince from Mantua, who was perhaps the greatest monster that ever disgraced humanity.

CHAP. III.

The arrival at Milan of Prince Vicentio de Gonzago of Mantua, his mind and manners. The gluttony and lasciviousness of the Prince Vicentio assist further to debauch the mind of the Prince Charles. A picture of the Prince Vicentio.

THE Prince Vicentio was received at Milan with the most distinguished honors suited to his illustrious birth, as the heir to the Dukedom of Mantua, and the equipage and retinue which he brought with him were of the most splendid description.

The mind, however, of the Prince Vicentio was composed of the most frightful materials that ever disgraced human nature: he was haughty, proud, revengeful, mean and malicious; excessively fond of adulation and popularity, and on all occasions pretending

to be the friend of the lower orders of the community.

The Prince Vicentio was a professed profligate; women were considered by him as beings intended only for sensual enjoyment, and scarcely worthy of consideration in any other respect. The vilest images of lust that ever disgraced the imagination, were the favorite themes of conversation of this wretch, and even the trinkets and ornaments of his dress had obscene resemblances. The libertine Prince Charles was ignorant and even innocent in comparison with his new friend, who was destined, however, to complete his depravity, and it was he who first made him acquainted with the deliberate study of a heated imagination, and with all the varieties of wickedness. The Prince Vicentio, during his stay at Milan, wallowed in all the excesses and debaucheries of the court, and, in return for the elegant hospitable reception afforded him by the weak Duke,

fixed and determined his son in the habits of vice and enormity.

The picture of the Prince Vicentio of Mantua had all the resemblance of the poet Milton's celebrated personification of the Angel of Darkness ; his port was majestic, but the most consummate pride and arrogance seemed to determine every step that he took on the ground, which he seemed rather to spurn, than to tread ; his body was erect, and his face elevated, except that his eyes were cast downwards, and appeared to lour on every object that he passed, with contempt and disdain : his favorite attitude was the arms folded, and the elbows raised nearly in a line with his eyes, his action beside was grand and graceful, and the prince was evident even under the concealment of his mantle. The features of his face were sufficiently marked, his eye was full, and displayed a restless voluptuous expression, whenever it was fixed on a woman who he thought an object of

desire ; his teeth were beautifully white, his nose of a fine model, and his eye brows large.

The Prince Vincentio was without disguise in his gallantries, and the most depraved of the Italian women, with whom he had succeeded, were employed by him to betray those with whom he had not. Crime with Prince Vicentio was not a matter of temptation or inadvertence, it was the result of consultation and deliberation, and after fruition the objects were deserted without either shame or remorse. The Prince Vicentio had at his command numerous of the *stiletto*, the only persons, indeed, with whom he kept good faith, and these were paid well, that his power might be as dreadful and as certain as he could wish. Such was the character of the Prince of Mantua.

CHAP. IV.

A description of certain of the Ladies of the Court of Milan.

PERHAPS there never was a Court that possessed a display of beauty and fascination equal to that of the Court of Milan, at the time of the arrival of Prince Vicentio, though most of the females who composed it, since the Duke had almost entirely resigned the government into the hands of Prince Charles were of that description who indulged themselves in gallantries with little or no constraint, and who lived shamelessly with favorites, contrary to those laws which constitute the happiness of families and of society. It is true that the manners allowed great indulgencies, and liberties, but the relaxation did not go unpunished, the jealousy of rivals was sufficient to destroy, at every

instant, the pleasures of intrigue, and often the objects fell a sacrifice to their pursuit of illicit pleasure.

The most distinguished for wit and beauty of the Ladies of Milan were :

The Lady Laurenta di Voltorna of a distinguished family; nature had with more than common care adorned this lady with her graces and fascinations, and had, on her part, almost sent her into the world a model of perfection of symmetry of form; her figure was grand and majestic, and displayed, in every movement her superior mind and rank; her bosom, which equalled in whiteness the plumage of the swan, teemed with all the ripe luxuriance of woman; her eyes were filled with an expression of pride and haughtiness, that seemed to insist on obedience; her fine ruby lips surrounded a set of the most beautiful enamelled teeth, and her nose rather of the roman, than grecian model, seemed to add to the grandeur of her expression. A fine suffusion of

health had spread itself over her cheeks, but which had been supplanted with the fashionable substitute of paint, more profuse with colour, but infinitely less charming than that from the hand of nature.

The mind of Lady Laurenta di Volturina was constantly agitated with turbulent passions, and her beautiful bosom heaved alternately with love, jealousy, friendship, hatred, forgiveness, and revenge ; it was a fine picture to see the Lady di Volturina at the time that her jealousy, or her revenge was awakened. It was then that she used to take her lute in her hand, and make the sounds swell under her touch with the softest notes of tenderness and love, until, by degrees, they became more and more impassioned : it was at that moment that she would rise from her seat, and strike the strings until she made them tremble as with rage ; then she would walk up and down the corridore of her palace, as if insensible to every

object, and wrapt up entirely in the contemplation of her real or fancied wrongs, until exhausted she would sink down on her couch, and bursting into tears, let fall the instrument from her hand.

It may be easily imagined that the Lady di Voltorna was a dangerous woman, and truly Italian; nor would she hesitate to use the dagger or the poison in the time of her resentment; else she had many noble qualities, was generous, compassionate, and full of benevolence and charity.

The Lady Victoria di Vicenza, the next in rank for beauty, was of the middle size, her person comely and her limbs exquisitely moulded; her neck was of an elegant turn, and her bosom of a firmness never excelled in woman, containing treasures that would have tempted an anchorite. The Lady Victoria was an epicure, and a *bacchanite*, and would drink of the juice of the Manitan grape as freely as auy of the

young nobles of the Court of Prince Charles, at which times she was as bold and insolent as a common french *poisarde*: she was of low extraction, but had married the old Count de Vicenza, who only lived long enough to find that his lady was both a tyrant and faithless to his bed.

The Lady Joanella di Brenta was about six feet in height, and perfectly proportioned; her eyes spoke a dignity and superiority of mind, while her expressive features were softened by a complexion in which the rose was exquisitely blended with the lily; her white and fine-formed neck was such as a Guido only could have described; her hair was of a beautiful light brown; her teeth the most polished white, and her whole figure a model of symmetry and elegance. The Lady Joanella was of a very superior character, but had been drawn into the vortex of vice and dissipation by having been entangled in debt by play, which had placed her in

the most dreadful predicaments to save her from a prison, and thus yielded to her necessities that virtue, which would have resisted all the arts of seduction.

The Countess Livia di Modena was under the middle size, her person rather *embonpoint*, her bosom full and voluptuously formed, her eyes filled at once with all the mischief and rapture of love. The Countess Livia was an excellent dancer, and by her dress and activity favored so much the researches of the imagination, that she would have awakened the torpidity of any monk in christendom.

The Countess Livia was of the kindest disposition in the world, but a little abandoned profligate, addicted to the vice of play, and a famous *intrigante*.

The Lady Clementina di Campania was tall and thin, her form slender and delicate, her eyes sleepy and languishing, her complexion fair beyond description, her hair long, and of the

finest auburn ; she was past the age of forty but she was full of love and sentiment; she affected, however, a serious disposition, and her fascination consisted in a display of sensibility, that made her company sought for and valued ; hers was a bosom in which one would repose secrets as in the most sacred deposit, and which she was capable of keeping, until some great purpose, arising from her jealousies or revenge, was to be effected, and then they were acted on with a duplicity and art, that would astonish an ingenuous and candid mind.

The Marchesina Amphilisia di Medicis, the particular favorite of the Prince Charles, was of an age also exceeding forty, she was tall and portly, her bosom large, and the features of her face displaying grandeur and pride, her eyes were complacent only to the Prince, and even the Marchesi, her husband, seldom met with any but the glances of disdain or contempt, he was, however,

a poor stupid creature who sought only his repose or the pleasures of the table.

CHAP. V.

The Supper.—The Stranger in the Red Mantle.

DURING the time of the carnival, at Milan, a grand supper was given by the Prince Charles, to which were invited all the flower of the young nobility. The Prince Vicentio di Gonzago was to be of the party, and most of the ladies whose persons and characters have been described. The Princess Andreolla lived at a palace of her own, on the borders of the Mincio, in retirement, and although the Princess Gabriella was often with the prince her father, he had propriety, or rather pride enough to preserve her from the danger of contamination, by keeping her from the company of the dissolute, and depraved.

The night was far advanced, and the gay scene of the carnival had nearly closed, when the palace of Prince Charles was illuminated with a thousand tapers and torches, to receive its numerous and splendid guests; the gates were thrown open, and the tables spread with every delicacy; the Marchesina di Medicis presided, and the Ladies Laurentina, Volturna, Clementina, and Victoria, adorned with their graces and enchantments the splendour of the feast; goblet after goblet was filled, of the most delicious Italian wines, and the healths of every beauty present and absent, were drunk by the princes and nobles: the attractions and fascinations of the women, and the effects of drink, began already to produce confusion, jealousy, and riot, and the maddened guests losing all decorum and restraint, pursued their gallantries to extreme impropriety; the Prince Charles, assisted and supported by the Prince Vicentio, was chief in the noise and exultations

of drunkenness, and sallied from chamber to chamber in search of the ladies who had sought the refreshments and coolness of the corridors, and in one of these it happened that the lady Marie di Pozzi had sought an instant of retirement ; the drunken Prince, finding her alone, exulted in the opportunity, and proceeded to those liberties which the libertine conceives he may practice, with impunity, whenever a beautiful object is in his power ; unhappily, however, for the gallantry of the Prince, the Count di Pozzi, the lady's husband, was in the corridor and witnessed the brutal exultation of the Prince ; a rencontre was the immediate consequence, in which the Prince would have been worsted, by the superior address and skill of his adversary ; at the instant, however, when Prince Charles was disarmed and on the point of being thrown to the ground, and compelled to beg his life, a stranger whose face was concealed by the foldings of a red mantle

approached from one of the doors of the Palace into the corridor, and exclaimed in a firm tone “ *Forbear*” *Remember it is your Prince.* The Count di Pozzi immediately let go his hold, and reflecting an instant, bent on his knee and returned the sword of Prince Charles ; the Prince, leaning on the arm of Prince Vicentio, now retired from the corridore, but did not neglect to enquire who the person was who had arrived in time to prevent further mischief : an instant search was made after the *Stranger in the Red Mantle*, whose face had not been seen, the voice appeared to have been altered, and disguised, but not any were able to guess who the Stranger could be, who had appeared so mysteriously.

The company were now invited to return to the supper room, where fresh wines, and delicacies were prepared, and here all the guests unmasked. *The stranger however in the red mantle* was not among them, and no conjecture could even be

made who that very extraordinary personage could be. The Prince who was disappointed and dissatisfied, could not resume his spirits, and for the rest of the evening drank only of the wines that he might steep his senses in forgetfulness, and which purpose was so completely answered that he was carried to his bed, apparently without life, while Prince Vicentio, more active and wicked, was the high priest of the abominable rites and mysteries of the Palace.

CHAP. VI.

An opposite character introduced, in the person of Henry St. Florentin — his worth and excellence, and the early enmities which he had to encounter.

THE story of the young Henry St. Florentin was, that when an infant, he had the misfortune of loosing his father, the Count St. Florentin, who was of Placenza, and that he had been brought up under the care of his mother the Countess Agniola.

The lady Agniola St. Florentin was young, handsome, and rich ; her Palace was situated in the beautiful forest of Apulia, whose scenery is adorned with the splendid lavetera, the arbisca, the tree heath, the euphorbia, the tall stemmed southernwood, and the purple lilac.

Henry St. Florentin, when a child, was of a noble character, his person was an-

gelic, and his features so interesting that they displayed at once all the excellent affections, tenderness, benevolence, charity, and humility ; and as he grew up, the gallantry and bravery of a high and noble mind was added to his other virtues.

The Lady St. Florentin, with the attractions of beauty and wealth, was surrounded by a croud of admirers ; among the foremost of whom was the Count Montorio, one of the ancient nobility of Naples, residing at the castle of Bufalora, on the banks of the Tecino.

The Count Montorio plays so principal a part in this history, that it will be proper to give the outlines of the character of a man destined to destroy the happiness of many, and to further the designs of the wicked and malignant.

The Count Montorio, born without fortune, but of an unbounded ambition, had early learnt to bend his haughty spirit to his views, he had accustomed himself to smile alike at

the applause, the contempt, the esteem, or the hatred of the world : any measure appeared good to Montorio that led towards riches, or honors ; cowardly and vindictive, ambitious and overbearing, haughty to those from whom in his deep contemplations he could not expect any thing ; abject and mean enough to submit to any mortification from those whose protection he hoped some day to attain ; not sufficiently courageous to commit bold and daring crimes, but yet depraved enough to perpetrate the worst act, where the chance of detection did not occur ; in a word, affecting the virtues of nobleness, of charity, and even of sensibility, Montorio was the subtle actor of benevolence, while his heart was the seat of every abominable vice ; such was the man who by his cunning, and address had managed to insinuate himself into the good graces of the virtuous, and accomplished Lady Agniolla St. Florentin.

It was not difficult for the Count Montorio to put at a distance most of the other lovers of the lady Agniolla, his manners were rude, and arrogant in the extreme, and he had acquired a character for courage, chiefly from the circumstance of the Counts Montorio having been famed in arms during the continual wars in the Milanese territory.

The person of Montorio was majestic, and of extraordinary appearance, he was more than six feet in height, his shoulders high and broad, his face marked with the lineaments of pride and disdain, yet occasionally relaxing when the purpose required, into the softest expressions of kindness and friendship; his strength was prodigious, and he was skilled in the science of arms, so much that there were very few among the cavaliers who would have chosen to encounter him in single combat.

The successful Montorio had no sooner espoused the beautiful and accomplished Agniolla, than he studiously

endeavoured to banish from her presence the unfortunate Henry St. Florentin, and was indeed only prevented from getting rid of him altogether by the fears which he entertained of the watchful eye of the monk St. Roch, who had had the care of the education of the youth, and loved him as a father.

The Count Montorio it has been said had two sons, one named Montaltus, and the other Muscardus, but the estates of the deceased Count St. Florentin were so settled that they could not devolve to the disposal of the lady Agniolla, unless in the event of the death of her son, Henry, before he became of age.

The Lady Agniolla had also a daughter, by her former marriage, named Celestina, but she had placed her in the convent of the order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, soon after the death of the Count St. Florentin. The Lady Celestina was beautiful and accomplished but the pride of leaving a rich heir in the son, had bestowed on the daughter only a slender income.

The Count Montorio, who also had scarcely been permitted to visit the court of the Prince Charles, before his marriage, was now grown at once so rich and powerful, that he was received at the Palace with great kindness, and condescension, as were his two sons, they were indeed all of them qualified for the table of the Prince, by their disregard of every decency, and their contempt for virtue and sobriety, the Count Montorio was the first to flatter his royal master's desires, and had managed to make himself the particular favorite of the detestable Vicentio, who employed him on many occasions, where his cunning, or his treachery was serviceable.

Henry St. Florentin passed several years subjected to the ill will of his father-in-law, and was treated with coolness and indifference by his mother, who, to please her new lord, bestowed her favor on the infamous Montaltus, and altogether neglected the attentions

she had been used to pay to her own child.

Henry loved his mother with sincere affection, but the already unhappy Henry had no friend left but his old tutor, the faithful St. Roch, from whom he was soon destined to be separated to attend his studies at the College of Padua.

The parting of Henry, with his old master, was an affecting scene, “ how often, said he to his pupil, have I shed tears at the presages of what has happened, I was fearful myself that the beauty, and riches of your mother would lead to the importunities of suitors, and that some one of them would succeed ; ah little did I think into whose hands it would be thy lot to fall, but courage my Henry, rely but on Providence, against whose will the most powerful, are weak. The wicked may seek to harm thee, but Providence can perplex their measures, and confound them with their own devices ; be but virtuous my child and you will be safe.”

Henry embraced the good old monk, and then went to take leave of the Countess his mother, in whose breast all the tender recollections appeared for an instant to be revived ; she took his hand, kissed it and let drop some tears ; the Count Montorio even seemed affected, and it was not disguise ; he was overcome with joy at the circumstance of the departure of Henry, and bestowed on him for the instant, all the attentions which decency, or even courtesy could demand.

The faithful St. Roch, not satisfied with the leave he had taken of his pupil, appeared before Montorio, and asked permission to attend his scholar to Padua, which was granted.

On the arrival of the Monk St. Roch, and his pupil at the gates of the college of Pratenza, at Padua, the old tutor took leave of his charge, with these remarkable words " go my son, enrich thy mind with virtue, and learning, and in case that I may chance to die, or be re-

moved from the knowledge of my Henry's fortunes, defend him heaven, and in the instant of danger or extremity send him a *stranger friend.*"

Montorio, who at length was relieved from the restraints imposed on his conduct by the presence of the good old monk, at the Palace of Apulia, took occasion to dismiss him altogether, and now managed his intrigues so well, at the court of Milan, through the influence of the Prince Vicentio, whose debts had placed him in the predicament of selling his interest, that by means of a loan furnished from the fortune of his lady, Montorio succeeded in securing to himself the command of a troop, and when Henry had been two years at Padua, the Lady Agniolla feeling even yet an interest for the welfare of her son made up her mind to procure him a situation in the same regiment with the count. Montorio, however, had frequently before this determination of the Lady Agniolla, endeavoured to persuade Henry

to embrace a monastic life, as best suited to his character and disposition, and probably would have succeeded, if the honest St. Roch, faithful to his trust, had not advised Henry of the motives, and thus counteracted the machinations of Montorio. Henry St. Florenfin was, therefore, appointed to a post in the same regiment with the Count, at the instance of the Lady Agniolla, and entered immediately into service.

When Henry joined his troop for the first time, he might have passed for the handsomest and most accomplished cavalier of the Italian states, for although the Lady Agniolla had neglected his education, yet the Monk St. Roch had redoubled his attention, and found means of supplying him with such books as were necessary for his studies, while his mother entrusted him to the care of a governess who was mistress of most of the languages spoken at that time, and finished in music, painting and dancing ; so that after having been

at the College of Pratenza, he wanted nothing but a knowledge of men and manners, and of the world to complete him, but that knowledge was to cost him dear.

It was not difficult for Henry to discover that his father-in-law was hated in the regiment, by all the officers, who, on numerous occasions he had treated with unnecessary severity, to raise himself, as he thought, in the favour of the captain of the Milanese force, the Duke de Montferrand, and so to make his way for the attainment of still higher command, while his son, Montaltus, though younger than Henry, was appointed to a post above him in the same troop, and determined, in conjunction with his father, to humiliate him as much as possible, and force him into a disgust for the service, that might end in his ready adoption of a monastic life. Montaltus lost no opportunity therefore, being his superior, of subjecting him to mortification, or of re-

proving him without a fault, even in the presence of the cavaliers and soldiers serving at the citadel of Novarra.

Some time elapsed, during which Henry St. Florentin suffered continual vexations, until, at length, he became of age, and Montorio could no longer evade giving him an account of his fortune. This was a period dreaded by the Count, and required some immediate determination. —

CHAP. VII.

The Feast.—The unexpected Guest.—The Stranger in the Red Mantle.

PREVIOUS to the departure of Henry St. Florentin from his regiment, to take possession of his patrimony, an invitation was given by him to the cavaliers to partake of an entertainment, to which all, without exception, were invited, except the Count Montorio, who was at the forest of Apulia.

Every thing that was delicious, and exquisite was provided, with wines of the richest flavor, and so beloved was Henry that not any of his comrades neglected paying him the respect of attending on the occasion ; even Montaltus was present.

Henry, seated at the head of his table, dispensed liberally the dainties which it afforded, and filled the goblets of his

friends with the wines of Mantua and Brescia ; the conversation was elegant yet social, and all present seemed to partake of the convivial scene.

The wine had now raised the spirits of the guests so much, that they began to lose the restraints of sobriety, and to give way to some of the extravagancies which accompany a debauch : Henry himself, unused to excess, felt the effects of the Brescian grape, when a stranger, habited in a red mantle, which was folded round the face nearly to the forehead, approached, and took a seat at the table, which was vacant, one of the guests having left the room to go on the duty of the citadel ; an expressive sorrow and sedateness seemed to dim the lustre of the piercing eyes of the stranger, whose manner denoted superior rank.

The extraordinary appearance of the stranger in the red mantle, had attracted the notice of Henry, who, at first, seemed inclined to challenge the intru-

sion, but checking the impulse of pride, his natural urbanity prevailed, and he recollect ed that, in some degree, the occasion of his coming of age, and his general invitation opened the doors to every traveller who would do honor to his entertainment ; he only endeavoured, therefore, by his attentions, to invite him the more to partake of the refreshments. It was, however, in vain, the stranger still preserved the same melancholy demeanour, though he returned the civilities of Henry with a grace and courtesy unequalled by any at the table.

Henry was engaged pressing his friends to drink freely, and his goblet was filled afresh by Montaltus, for the purpose of giving a health, when the Stranger in the Red Mantle, as in a frolic, put his hand across the table, and dashed the vessel to the ground. Instantly the company started from their seats to resent the insult offered to their host ; their swords were drawn in a moment ;

but Henry promptly and politely forbid their interference, and beckoning the Stranger, withdrew to an adjoining corridore, whither he was followed by Montaltus, who, on this occasion, pretended a readiness to take care that his kinsman should have fair play. The Stranger in the Red Mantle followed slowly, and with the same mild demeanor, unruffled by all that had passed.

Henry had no sooner reached the corridore than he demanded, in severe terms, an explanation of the Stranger's conduct, which had degraded him in the eyes of his company, and drawing his sword, placed himself immediately in an attitude of attack ; the stranger stood unmoved : at length, Henry receiving no explanation, demanded to know the name and rank of the person who had dared to present himself uninvited at his table ; a pause of an instant ensued, when Henry repeating the question with some warmth, the stranger put a sealed paper into his hand,

and then folding his arms, stood composedly, until Henry had opened the packet.

The Count St. Florentin had no sooner opened the sealed paper than he stood unnerved and motionless, leaning on his sword, and supported by Montaltus, who looked with astonishment as he beheld him.

The conduct of the Stranger in the Red Mantle was as extraordinary: he waved the right hand with courtesy to Henry, and left the corridor.

The cavaliers of the regiment had, by this time, forced themselves into the room, and were astonished to find Henry leaning on the arm of Montaltus, and were all of them apprehensive that he was wounded, but finding that that was not the case, various conjectures were entertained, and some not at all to Henry's credit, and indeed the account which Montaltus gave, did not assist to remove the impression the officers had taken, and who had before thought

highly of the spirit and gallantry of their companion. From Henry himself, however, not any thing could be gathered, he was wrapped up in his own contemplations, and calling to recollection the words of his good old father St. Roch, he was the more involved in thought at the mysterious intervention of the Stranger in the Red Mantle, he resolved, therefore, to treasure up every circumstance in his mind, nor divulge the contents of the sealed packet to any one. It was thus, however, that his conduct became liable to many misconstructions, and that he incurred the slight and neglect of his comrades, and which determined him not to return again to the regiment.

CHAP. VIII.

The Prince Vicentio sees a beautiful Milanese lady at mass, and becomes enamoured with her person, when she proves to be Juliuna the daughter of the Marquis de Simonetta.

THE Prince Vicentio, who had ranged for some months every evening, through the streets of Milan, in search of adventure, was engaged one night with some cavaliers at chess, in an open corridor of a tavern, when they noticed an elegant carrosse, drawn by mules, in the street below, with several servants with flambeaux behind. The Prince Vicentio immediately made enquiries whose carriage it was, when he was informed that it belonged to the Marquis de Simonetta, and that his daughter, Lady Juliana, was then going as was usual with her to the church of Saint Maria de la Scala, to mass.

the Prince immediately left play, and pretending that he had business, ordered his coachman to drive home, but which orders he countermanded as soon as he was out of hearing of his companions, and directed him to take him to the same place of devotion to vespers.

The Prince Vicentio was not long in the chapel before he discovered the lady, who had been so much the object of his attention; and as beauty is still more lovely in the act of piety, the Prince Vicentio became instantly enraptured with the charms the lady Juliana displayed in the most divine face, and first form that was ever beheld. The Prince approached as near as possible to the beautiful Juliana who was so occupied in sincere prayer and thanksgiving, that she did not lift her eyes even for an instant from the crucifix which she held in her hand; nor could the Prince get an opportunity of speaking a word to her, when the vespers were concluded, as she was joined by an old lady who seemed

to have the care of the person of the young and charming Countess di Simonetta.

The Prince Vicentio made many enquiries the same evening concerning the beauty, the fortune and the character of the lady, who was the object of his passion, but received very little encouragement from some part of the history: he knew that her rank was very high, that she was descended of one of the first families in Milan, that her father, the Marquis, was very reserved and proud; but those circumstances he considered as presenting no difficulties to the hopes of a Prince, and he was sensible that his own person and accomplishments would have their consequence; the only thing which he dreaded was the character of the Lady Juliana, he was afraid that, in spite of all that he could do, she would discover the libertine in his manners, and that her mind was too pure and perfect to associate with any man, let his rank be what it

might, who was dissolute and profigate. He knew, however, that the pride of the Marquis would keep every humbler suitor at a distance; and that, with him, the heir apparent to the throne of Mantua, would be accepted and approved, as deserving the hand of his daughter. He did not neglect, therefore, the next morning, to call on the Marquis, and met with a gracious reception, when he took an opportunity to mention, in high terms, the beauty and figure of the Lady Juliana, and the high respect which he had for her character. The Marquis was greatly flattered by the condescension of a Prince Royal of Mantua, and was still more gratified when Don Vicentio proposed an alliance with his daughter. The Marquis, without hesitation, acknowledged the honor which he desired to confer on his family, and assured the Prince, that if the Duke gave his permission he should be very proud of the distinction. The Prince Vicentio, on his part, engaged

that his friend, the Prince Charles, would procure the permission of the Duke of Milan, and that the affair should be immediately concluded, and indeed the only person not consulted, was the Countess Juliana herself, who, on her return from her morning ride, received from her father an account of the gracious visit which the Prince Vicenzio had paid, with an intimation of his wishes that she might receive him as destined to become her husband.

The Countess di Simonetta, though very young, had a fine understanding and judgment, and was intelligent and well informed on most subjects, nor was she a stranger to the characters of the different princes and nobles of Italy ; she could not help, therefore, receiving the intelligence of the Prince Vicentio's visit, from her father, with some concern, and did not hesitate to express her unwillingness to receive a man who she could not esteem, as he was known to

be a professed libertine. The Marquis smiled at what he called the folly of his daughter, and her want of knowledge of the world. "It might be very well," cried he, "for a young country girl; or the daughter of a citizen to speak of the profligacy of a suitor; but it is very different with persons of distinguished rank, they do not interfere, like the vulgar, with the morals of each other, and if the Prince Vicentio gives you the allowance proper for a Princess and the daughter of the Marquis of Simonetta, and behaves with the respect due to your rank, of which there can be no doubt, it is all that you could wish for. It is enough if the elegant proprieties and decencies of life are attended to: love is very well at a theatre or among the common people, but very ill becomes persons who must be governed in all their actions by a certain etiquette, and the manners of a court."

It was thus that the Marquis di Simonetta, who was a perfect courtier,

and a man of the world, endeavoured to reason with his daughter ; but the sensible and excellent Juliana was not to be deceived : her principles had been established by the care of the Signora Teresa, her governess, who had attended her from infancy, after the death of the Marchesina, and the difference of sentiment shone from her eyes with such splendour of truth, that the Marquis was glad, for that time, to change the subject.

CHAP. IX.

Henry St. Florentin arrives at the Palace of the Count Montorio.—He visits Milan.—His character developed.

HENRY, on his arrival at the Palace of Montorio, was received as might have been expected, with great distance and formal ceremony, which was, in some measure, removed by a sacrifice, which both flattered the pride and suited the convenience of Montorio, the surrender which Henry made of the greater part of his fortune to the Lady Agniolla, his mother, during her lifetime.

The Palace of Montorio was not the place, however, for Henry to find the pleasures of friendship and conversation ; he was viewed with a jealous eye, and the Monk Muscadus full of envy and malice, took occasion to misinterpret every word and action. Henry,

therefore, very prudently, under a pretence of seeing something of the world, left one of the most charming retreats of nature, to mix in scenes of gaiety and splendour; because that retreat had lost its beauties, and had become the den of a ferocious tyrant, who was constantly on the watch to rob and to destroy.

It was not, however, easy for Henry to go out of the reach of determined malice and contrivance. The Count Montorio was, in the active energies of his mind, constantly present with the object of his hatred, and forming plans for his destruction ; he could not bear to think that Henry should stand in the way of his enjoyment of either wealth or honours, and covetted the fortune to which Henry had succeeded as heir to his father, the Count St. Florentin.

Until the marriage of the Count Montorio with the Lady Agniolla, he was reckoned the poorest of the Italian nobility, and had been no favorite even

in the court of the Prince Charles, on account of the turbulence and insolence of his deportment. The most ardent wish, therefore, of Montorio was, that so bright a star, as the accomplished Henry St. Florentin, should not rise in the court of Milan, and his attention was never an instant disturbed from its desired object: although Henry was removed, his enemy was close at hand with all the engines of craft and malice to destroy him.

Whilst the Count Montorio was forming a variety of plots against the life even of Henry, that noble youth was engaged in the society of a few friends, for the purpose of dissipating a melancholy, which seemed to threaten to become habitual. Henry was too generous and unsuspecting, and much too brave to entertain any apprehensions of personal danger; yet he could not altogether dismiss from his reflections the cruel dislike of Montorio, the interest which he had in his destruction, and

the mysterious circumstance of the Stranger in the Red Mantle having dashed the goblet from his lips, and, besides, the contents of the sealed pacquet ; he determined, however, if possible, to dismiss these impressions, and to oppose the tendency of his disposition to retirement, by mixing in the gay scenes of the city of Milan.

The gallantry and nobleness of mind of Henry St. Florentine procured him many friends in the capital, for he joined with the desirable qualifications of an accomplished cavalier, that grace and courtesy which constituted the true character of nobility. The frankness of his manners left no room for dissimulation, and, as a mirror, reflected all the good qualities of his heart.

In the person of Henry St. Florentin was fulfilled all the advantages of figure, and in his mind all that the strictest honor could demand ; indeed he had always esteemed virtue so highly, that he became enamoured with her precepts,

and which alone delighted and employed an imagination unpolluted by any of the low and degrading images, which occupy the minds of the base and sensual; yet all his correct attention to propriety was without any formal or fastidious distinctions: he was unembarrassed in his manners, and not at all ashamed of allowing good morals to be the best ornament of an Italian cavalier.

It may be easily supposed that such a character could be no great favorite in the court of Prince Charles, and, indeed, although he had undergone the customary ceremony of being presented when he came of age, yet he had received no particular notice from the Prince, who, doubtless, was prejudiced against him by the representations of the Count Montorio, and Montaltus and Muscadus, his sons.

Henry St. Florentin was, however, a character who the Prince ought to have valued; his friendship was of the first

estimation, his word was the strict letter of truth, and, in his breast, the most cautious might repose even the most dangerous secrets. Honor and generosity were in him pure emanations flowing from the same uncorrupted source. If Henry at any time shone in conversation, it was when he was paying some handsome compliment, or when he was engaged in the defence of those whose characters were illiberally attacked in their absence, or in his endeavours to make every one pleased and satisfied with themselves, in which art he abundantly excelled. If Henry seemed to pay attention to trifles, it was in seizing the opportunity of saying something pleasant, and this he performed in so gracious a manner, that those with whom he conversed, conceived themselves free from any weight of obligation ; for, in the endeavour to please them, he seemed to have no other design than to please himself. In a word, the gallant and accomplished cavalier

was complete in the character of Henry, and the ladies of Milan, to whom he had been introduced by letters from the Countess Agniolla, were envious who should show most attention to the gallant Henry St. Florentin.

CHAP. X.

The grand Masque.—The Fire.—The Stranger in the Red Mantle.

AMONG other invitations received by Henry St. Florentin, while at Milan, was one from the amiable Countess di Barlemon, to a grand masque, and as Henry was in better spirits and desirous to amuse his mind from unpleasant reflections, he determined to go fancifully drest in a domino, that he might be able more easily to mix in conversation, and to observe the motley groupe, with greater security: he gave orders accordingly to his servant, who had a white domino prepared for him, with a blue hat and ostrich feathers.

Henry St. Florentin was impatient for the evening; his great fault was an ardent curiosity, and a fondness for new

adventures, with a passion for gallantry natural to his age and country.

The time being arrived, Henry St. Florentin set out for the hotel of the Count di Barlemont, attended only by his servant, and arrived thither with a croud of the first nobility of Milan, who were entering the saloon, already nearly full. The illumination of millions of lights, the music playing in the adjoining corridors, and the display of fancy dresses exceeded any thing that he had ever seen before.

Henry, that he might contemplate the gaiety of the scene undisturbed, sat on a couch, placed in one of the galleries leading to a principal saloon, and enjoyed the scene before him; numerous lovely females, drest in all the varieties of different climes, and adorned with tasteful plumes of feathers, and all the costly decorations of dress that could serve to set off, and display the charms of nature to advantage, passed continually before him. At length, completely

fascinated with some of the number of beauteous objects that had attracted his notice, Henry ventured to intermingle in the crowd, but endeavoured, in vain, to discover any of the acquaintance he had formed in Milan, or even any of the family of the Countess di Barle-mont. Henry accosted a number of elegant females, but their answers presently convinced him that, although well-bred women, they wanted that *es-prit* which is possessed by so few, but which constitutes the charm of beauty. Some of them, indeed, had a consider-ble share of wit, but it was desti-^{te} of that fascinating power over the un-derstanding, which displays more of mind than of levity. The conversation was chiefly trifling, and the same allu-sions and observations occurred con-tinually; Henry began to get tired of the sameness of the spectacle, and was on the point of returning home, when the arrival of a fresh troop of masques, determined him to defer his departure.

The choice of characters of the party, and the taste and magnificence of their dresses served to fix the general attention of the company. Henry approached the groupe, and was struck particularly with the majestic deportment of a sultana, followed by two female slaves; but after observing her for some moments, he was still more astonished to hear the lovely Fatima (for such was the name by which she was called by her party) say to one of her attendants,

"The insipidity of this scene is disgusting, and the noise almost insupportable, we cannot even chuse here with whom we will converse, but are compelled to listen to the most wretched attempts at wit, happily overpowered by the buzz and clamour of many tongues. 'Ah, my dear Countess, let us go home to our own select circle, and be domestic and happy. This amusement has already lost its attractions.'"

Henry listened, but could not distinctly hear the reply. Something,

however, like magic, fixed his attention on the Sultana, with whom he would gladly have entered into conversation, for there was something in the sentiment she had uttered, which exactly corresponded with his own opinions on the subject.

Henry endeavoured in vain to draw the Sultana from her party, owing to the numerous masks who clustered round; and who effectually prevented any one from speaking to her but themselves. Among the rudest of these gazers were the Prince Charles and the Prince Vincentio, both in a state of intoxication; they were habited in blue dominos, and were known to be the princes more by their offensive and disgusting conduct than even by the richness of their dresses.

The Princes had become extremely troublesome, and impertinent to the Sultana, and one of them had rudely attempted to remove her mask, when, on a sudden, repeated cries of fire were

heard in all parts of the saloon, and produced a general scene of confusion ; when Henry, who had become already interested for the fair Sultana, fixed on her instantly as the object for his protection, and employed all the strength with which nature had endowed him to pierce through the crowd, who were flying in all directions, while the Princes, both stupidly drunk, suffered her to remain in a swoon on the floor, without appearing to know what was best to be done. The gallant Henry St. Florentin was not so insensible, he immediately raised her in his arms, and bore her out of the saloon, with the utmost rapidity. It was the thought and work of an instant ; in vain it was that piercing cries from her female friends were sent forth ; in vain it was that the masks who were of her party, endeavoured to pursue ; Henry, with his precious charge had made to the door as quick as lightening, and had disappeared.

The truth was, that Henry St. Floren-

tin was, with his fair Sultana, in the open air, for no obstacle had prevented the rapidity of his flight, and he did not perceive, for sometime, that he had mistaken the door leading to the street, and had escaped by a private entrance, which led into a badly lighted court.

A door of a house happened to be open, as Henry entered the passage, where he thought he might get assistance, and observing a gleam of light, he made his way to a chamber on the ground floor, badly furnished, and in which a solitary candle was burning. Not a creature, however, was to be seen, and Henry alarmed at the situation of the lady, placed her on an ancient couch, which stood in the chamber, and by the help of the dwindling and feeble light endeavoured to give her all the assistance in his power. He attempted gently to remove the mask from her face, and to give her air; but what were his sensations when he beheld one of the most engaging and interesting

countenances he had ever seen, and lovely though covered with the shades of death !

By the care and attention paid to her by Henry, the beautiful incognita began to revive, and opened a pair of the finest blue eyes that were ever seen. The Sultana looked wildly round the room, surveying every object about her with expressions of affright and dread, when, at length, she uttered a cry of surprise and horror, at finding herself in such a miserable apartment, in the arms of a stranger. At this instant two persons arrived: one of them a lady elegantly drest, and the other a man in a brown cloak, with a large hat, he had a dark visage, and immense mustacheos. It was easy for Henry to perceive that at least one of them were the occupiers of the place. and he began to make the proper apologies. The lady accepted his excuses very handsomely, and immediately offered assistance to her unexpected visitor. The man too showed

a disposition to be obliging, and in a rough unpolished way offered Henry some refreshment from a closet, from whence he produced brandy and fruit. The beautiful Incognita, being now sufficiently recovered, recollected that Henry was her deliverer, and viewing his figure and deportment, was convinced that he was of no mean rank, a blush overspread her cheek, as she returned him thanks for his prompt assistance, and as she enquired his name. Henry learnt from the man in the brown cloak that the fire at the Count di Barlemont's palace was extinguished, and the fair Incognita expressed a desire that Henry would see her in safety to her friends, at which the lady whispered the man in the brown cloak, and told Henry that the captain, as she called him, would make enquiries for Henry's carriage and servants. Henry acknowledged the civilities of the people of the House, and the Captain withdrew.

The Sultana was covered with jewels

of immense value, and the lady of the house politely recommended that she should take them from her disordered dress, and place them in a small casket for the purpose of taking them home safely, with which prudent measure she very readily complied.

It was not long before the Captain returned, with three very ill looking people. Henry was at a loss to conjecture who they were, until the Captain said, that the streets being in a state of confusion, he had brought in some of his friends to help guard the lady home, but that he had not succeeded in finding Henry's carriage, or, indeed, any other, as the hour was yet early, and they had not returned to be in waiting. The Captain appeared astonished that no carriages had arrived, and went out again, and Henry followed him to the door, with the intention of seeking for his servant at the Count di Barlemon's, when the man in the brown cloak stept back suddenly, and bolted the door on

the inside, leaving Henry without, who, in an instant, saw the danger in which the lady was placed, and that she was in some infamous house. Henry thundered at the entrance for admittance, but in vain. A faint murmur of voices only could now be heard, and not a glimmer of light was to be seen. It was to no purpose that he would have run to the police, they were all engaged at the palace of the Count di Barlemon, and no time was to be lost. In this extremity Henry, was accosted at the door, by a figure of a man, muffled up in a mantle, who enquired of him the cause of the disturbance, which he immediately explained. "Be still and discreet," replied the Stranger. "and follow my steps." The Stranger gave three distinct knocks at the gate, at the last of which a light appeared through the crevices, and a female voice enquired who was there, to which the Stranger replied "Pallestrino." When presently the door was cautiously opened, and

the Stranger entered, followed by the Count St. Florentin, who drew his sword, when they found the lady in a swoon, attended by the woman of the house. The stranger started when he beheld the distressed lady surrounded by wretches who were occupied in viewing the treasure which they had just taken from her.

“We are betrayed!” cried the man in the brown cloak, seeing Henry advance; “Not so,” answered the stranger, who Henry now observed was habited in a Red Mantle, “but resign your prize to me, I command it!” The man, at these words, fell on his knees and immediately restored the jewels. The stranger now turned to the lady; “Awake, madam,” said he, from despair, “you are safe.” The incognita was sensible enough to know the language of friendship, and besides fancied that she knew the voice of the person who addressed her; while Henry St. Florentin was lost in conjecture how

the stranger came to be possessed of the influence he had over the Bravoes, for such now they appeared to be. He was however convinced that the danger was over. “Come, Madam,” cried the Stranger in the Red Mantle, “put yourself under my protection, we will leave this place!” At these words the man, whom they had called captain, and the woman of the house, came to the stranger and bent on their knees in suppliant attitudes: “It is enough cried the Stranger, there has no harm been done, but be aware of the third time.”

After they had departed from the house, the Stranger addressed Henry: “Sir, here are the lady’s jewels; you must not inform the police of the habitation you have left—promise this on your honor.” Henry complied instantly with the requisition, when the Stranger led them through an avenue into the main street. “You are now safe,” said he, “the palace of the Count di Barlemont is close at hand, it is down

the next turning on the left ; Heaven bless and guard you !”—“A thousand thanks to my deliverer,” cried the lady, “to both my deliverers.”—“But pray, sir,” cried Henry, “tell me to whom am I indebted for so great a service done to this lady,”—“I am, sir,” cried he, (turning away abruptly) “The Stranger Friend.” Having uttered these words, the brave deliverer of the lady disappeared in an instant, and left them in suspense as to who he could possibly be; they could, however, be certain from the nobleness of his deportment and his manner, that he was of no common rank, and they had observed that he was followed by several cavaliers in the same habits.

Henry St. Florentin had now an opportunity of having some conversation with his incognita on the surprising adventures of the evening, and heard from her own lips that she was Juliana, the daughter of the Marquis di Simonetta. It is certain that Henry would

rather have been informed that she was of less rank, for there was not any thing that could have added to his respect for her, and he seemed already to entertain a sentiment which, though sudden, was sincere, and promised to endanger his happiness.

While Henry had been thus occupied in giving assistance to the beautiful Countess di Simonetta, the masks had left the saloon ; assistance arrived, and water having been instantly procured, the flames were presently extinguished. There was, however, a noise and bustle throughout the palace, and when they came to the gate they learned from the servants that they were all in the greatest consternation for the safety of the Countess di Simonetta. Messengers had been dispatched in every direction, and the police had been made acquainted with the fact of her having been carried off, in the general confusion, by a domino.

The Countess di Simonetta, leaning on the arm of Henry, ascended with trembling steps, the staircase of the palace of the Count di Barlemon, and her name being announced by the servants, the loudest acclamations of joy succeeded. The Countess di Barlemon ran to the door and kissed her friend, and in the height of her rapture, kissed also the hand of Henry, her deliverer, while the Count extolled his presence of mind and activity. A thousand thanks and encomiums were lavished on him by the whole family. The Marquis di Simonetta and his daughter were, at this season, on a visit at the Countess Albici, of Florence, during the time of their own palace undergoing reparations, and the carriage was ordered to convey the Lady Juliana to her residence.

CHAP. XI.

Interesting Explanations between Henry St. Florentin and the Countess Juliana di Simonetta.

UNTIL the moment that the coach was moving, the lady Juliana had been so much agitated with the events of the night, that she had altogether neglected to make any other than the mere exclamations of a grateful heart for her deliverance. The alarm caused by the fire, the adventure which succeeded in the strange house, and the natural timidity of her sex rendered her, for a time, insensible to the forms of customary politeness. At length, favored by the light of the moon, she ventured to cast her eyes on Henry with a look expressive of wonder and esteem, at the same instant that he had fixed his on

hers, and was watching every motion. " You ought to judge, sir," said she, " very unfavorably of both my mind and manners, and that I must be the most ungrateful of beings that I have not until this moment properly expressed the high sentiment of gratitude which I ought to entertain for the kind and prompt assistance which you afforded me ; but if you will only reflect for a moment on my situation, I am sure that you will forgive me ; separated from my dear friend the Countess Albici, to whose care the Marquis, my father, had entrusted me ; finding myself alone with you, alarmed with the apprehensions which rushed on my mind, at that wretched house, and tortured with reflections on what must be the painful solicitude of my friends—these all constitute so many claims to your indulgence, and so many chances for me to hope that you will extend that indulgence to me, and do justice to my feelings. She had nearly added to my heart,

when the moon, gleaming from the edge of a cloud which had obscured it, shone on Henry's face, and discovered to the Countess his impassioned looks. The fear of having said too much, to a stranger, imposed silence on her lips for some minutes, and which was not interrupted by Henry, who was too much agitated to pursue the subject. "I ought, sir, to acquaint you," continued the Countess, as my friend, " that I am the only daughter of the Marquis, who is favoured with the friendship of the Prince Charles. After the death of my mother I was placed at the convent of our lady of Mount Carmel, where I remained six years, and since have resided with the Marquis, my father: I was invited to pass a month or two with the Countess Albici, she was formerly the intimate friend of my mother, and was so kind as to offer the Marquis the use of apartments in her house during the time that his

own palace is under reparation. It happened that at dinner the conversation turned on an invitation which the Countess had received to go to a grand mask at the Count di Barlemon's, when I happened to express a desire to be of the party, and a servant was immediately dispatched with a letter to the Countess to make her acquainted with my wishes, and who returned an answer full of the most polite and affectionate expressions from that elegant lady, entreating that I would fulfill my intention, and complete, as she politely chose to say, the splendour of the evening. I was extremely pleased to find that several ladies, visitors of the Countess Albici, had been invited, and meant to be of the party ; and indeed, although the magnificence of the scene was not new to me, I should have been much happier in the domestic circle of my dear Countess Albici, or even in my convent."

Henry thanked the Countess de Simonetta in the most graceful manner that he was master of, for her condescension in making him acquainted with so many particulars relative to herself, when the carriage stopped, and the coachman informed them that they had arrived near the house of the Countess Albici ; but he had the caution not to go to the door, when Henry stepped out, and communicated the happy intelligence of the safety of the Countess di Simonetta to one of the domestics, telling him that she was on her way to the palace, fearing that his appearance as a stranger might create alarm.

The Countess di Simonetta, who had not till now reflected on the reception which she might expect from her father, who, she was certain, would by that time have been sent for from a party, where he had been engaged to supper, trembled as she leant on Henry's arm, and said, " I shall ever retain, Sir,

the most grateful recollection of the services you have rendered me ; but, alas ! in your endeavours to save my life, you have perhap exposed me to great unhappiness ! What will my father say ? What observations shall I be liable to from those people who are with him, after so long and apparently unnecessary an absence after the fire happened ? And how can I satisfactorily explain the circumstances of our adventure at the house of the bad people, without exposing them to the resentment of the Marquis, and forfeiting my word to the generous and extraordinary stranger who preserved us ? Ah ! why did I desire to go to this fatal ball, and why were you inspired with the impulse of generosity that occasioned you to run so many dangers for a stranger ? ”

A flood of tears now run from the beautiful eyes of the Countess di Simonetta, and Henry was endeavouring to calm her sensations, when the car-

riage drew up to the door of the Countess Albici. Henry gave his hand to the Countess di Simonetta to assist her, when her arrival was immediately announced, and the Countess Albici, followed by the Marquis di Simonetta, came down the stairs to receive her. On the sight of the Marquis her father, the exhausted Juliana fainted, and the Marquis and Henry bore her in their arms to the chamber, where all the ladies had assembled who had accompanied her to the mask, and on seeing them she relapsed into a swoon several successive times. Henry was almost distracted at witnessing her sufferings, but fortunately every one were so occupied in rendering her immediate assistance, that they did not notice his particular distress of mind. In the mean time Henry endeavoured to collect himself, and approached the Marquis in the most respectful manner, who, considering him a stranger, expressed some

marks of surprise ; but the Count di Barlemont, with his lady, who had arrived by this time, in a manner the most flattering and gracious, presented him to the Marquis di Simonetta as the deliverer of the Countess his daughter ; notwithstanding which, Henry merely obtained a very formal bow, and, disconcerted at his reception, could only mutter a few inarticulate words. The Countess Albici, however, who had witnessed the extraordinary manner in which he had gallantly pressed through the crowd at the mask to save the Countess di Simonetta, advanced to the Marquis, and, in his presence, politely required of Henry to relate the particulars of the affair. The explanation which Henry gave was at once so modest and satisfactory, that it immediately dispelled every disagreeable impression that might have been taken, and the most lively admiration and gratitude filled every breast ; even the

Marquis appeared as if he reproached himself for having bestowed on the gallant deliverer of his daughter so cold and formal a reception : but the involuntary emotions which he experienced at the appearance of Henry, were less the effect of indignation at the presumption of a stranger ; for what he might consider an officious intrusion, than that of a secret uneasiness, for which he could not account, but which probably arose from his observing some features in Henry's face which brought to his recollection those of one who, at a former time, was dear to him.

The Marquis now took Henry's hand with the kindest condescension, and even apologized for his reserve, and offered him his friendship, with the most flattering compliments on Henry's bravery and conduct. But what made the Count St. Florentin still more pleased with himself was, that the Count and Countess di Barlemont, as well as

the Countess Albici, joined in pressing him to meet them the next day at that lady's house to dinner. Henry was delighted at the opportunity this interview would afford him, of seeing again the lovely and interesting Juliana, and returned them the customary thanks and compliments ; after which he politely withdrew, and left the domestic circle to recover their spirits. His own carriage having been sent for, Henry threw himself into it, and became immediately involved in reflections on all that had passed, while his imagination, which was always fervent, gave birth to a thousand romantic ideas. On a sudden, he became reasonable ; and as suddenly he gave way to the most extravagant notions : he recalled every look, every word of the beautiful and accomplished Juliana, and painted every circumstance afresh in the most glowing colours. The most delightful illusions took possession of his mind ; in short,

he had already begun to love, to hope, and to despair, as he flattered his own desires, and represented to himself the extreme improbability of the success of one, whose rank was so much beneath that of the lady, the object of his admiration. At length the train of his contemplations was interrupted by the arrival of the carriage at his lodgings ; and he retired to his apartment, not to rest, but to encounter a tumult of mind which he had never before experienced.

CHAP. XII.

Of Henry St. Florentin.—Portrait of the Countess di Simonetta.

ON the day appointed for Henry's visit at the Countess Albici's, that cavalier dressed himself in the most becoming and elegant stile, and looked to great advantage: he was tall and finely proportioned; his eyes full of expression and fire; his teeth white and regular; his hair a light brown; the vermillion tint of youth and health was on his cheeks; and a sensible mind and friendly disposition were pourtrayed in his face.

Henry arrived after the Countess di Simonetta, and was admitted into a select circle of beauties, but they were little more than the family, as no com-

pany but Henry was invited on that day.

Henry was astonished at the assemblage of charms in the person of the lovely Countess di Simonetta: her figure was grand, and the most beautiful symmetry and proportion were displayed throughout; the form of her face was a perfect oval; her features complacent, and yet marked with considerable expression; her eyes were blue, and filled with the fire of wit and intelligence; while her handsome arched eye-brows served to set off her high and well-proportioned forehead to advantage, and which was in every respect worthy of a diadem; her nose was finely formed of the Grecian model, and her cheeks were suffused with the blush of pure health and temperance; her mouth was small, and her vermillion lips inclosed a set of the finest white enamelled teeth, or rather presented a double row of pearls; while

the chin finished in a graceful curve, and completed the divine form of an intelligent and lovely face.

From the head downward, it was impossible to contemplate the perfect form of the beautiful Juliana without admiration ; her neck was united with grace to the shoulders, and her bosom, white as alabaster, and of fine proportion, swelled as with a consciousness of its own beauties, and with disdain at being concealed by the modest drapery with which it was covered ; her arms and hands were exquisitely turned ; her waist slender and handsome ; her limbs of elegant contour, and her feet small.

The expressive features of the Countess di Simonetta depicted all the characters of good nature and understanding, while about her lovely figure the graces seemed wantonly to show themselves at every instant from their concealment, as to ravish the beholder with new and unexpected charms.

The Countess di Simonetta was so extremely beautiful, that the endowments nature had bestowed frequently occasioned her admirers to become insensible to every other consideration. She might even have been dull, without losing any share of her fascination. When she spoke, her voice was as melodious as that of the nightingale; while the excellence of her mind and the qualities of her heart gained her more admirers, than even the ravishing charms of her person, or the heavenly music of her tongue; her understanding was admired and acknowledged by the witty and the wise.

There might be added to these perfections, a noble deportment, and an affable address, entirely natural and unaffected, and always accompanied by a benignant and gracious smile.

Although the mind of the Countess di Simonetta was so enlarged as has been described, yet she never affected

to enter into the general consideration of subjects unsuited to her sex ; there was not, however, any proper enquiry that could escape her penetration ; her discernment did not leave her any thing worth knowing uninvestigated, though there were few who knew better when to speak and when to be silent.

In ordinary conversation, the Countess di Simonetta never shewed any pedantic display of learning, nor uttered any remark or sentiment with precipitation ; they were always expressed in the most delicate language ; and the grandeur of her soul might have led her to indulge some too ambitious thoughts, if she had not learnt to restrain every inclination that might be dangerous to her peace, though she would not easily suffer any thing to interfere to prevent the generosity and munificence of her disposition ; and though not in the habit of receiving

obligations herself, she was nevertheless attentive to every opportunity of serving her friends.

The passions of the heart of the amiable Juliana were always subservient to the guidance of her religion ; and although she had a sensible and tender mind, still reason was allowed to regulate in every affair of moment. With these extraordinary advantages, the Countess di Simonetta had the fault of extreme timidity, and an insurmountable desire of retirement, little suited to her rank and circumstances in life.

The Countess Juliana had the art of being always interesting and pleasing : she was pious without superstition or hypocrisy ; and strictly virtuous and modest, without prudery or affectation.

It was not surprizing that the Prince Vicentio became enamoured with the personal charms of such a lady as the Countess di Simonetta ; but had he known the qualities of her mind, he

might have conjectured that his character must present an insurmountable bar to the hopes which he might entertain of an alliance. Princely virtues, in her opinion, would rank the owner above all society ; but princely vices were, in her estimation, fatal defects to grandeur, and made the possessor the lowest of human beings.

The passion which Henry had already begun to indulge was founded on an admiration of the virtues of the fair Juliana, as well as the beauty and loveliness of her person—a sentiment likely to increase with time, and which would be fatal to his happiness, in case of the failure of his hopes : a lesson to teach men that they should fly from even fair objects of desire, unless there are reasonable hopes of their attainment.

The conversation during the time of dinner was as refined and elegant as could be expected ; and the Marquis di

Simonetta, though advanced in years, and loaded with honours conferred on him by the Duke his sovereign, condescended to enter into conversation with Henry on familiar subjects ; and while his example could not fail of instructing Henry in all the polish of the courtier, his demeanor did not prevent him from an association of ideas necessary to esteem and friendship.

The conversation of the Countess di Barlemont was full of wit and repartee, entertaining and even whimsical, and kept the attention constantly alive ; while the Countess Albici, older, and more acquainted with the sorrows of life, having suffered by the death of a beloved daughter, who had fallen a martyr to a lingering disease, interspersed mild and sensible observations, with reflections that tempered the vivacity of her friend, and disposed all present to the love of piety and virtue. Henry, in his turn, displayed various

accomplishments, forgetful for the time of the ill-will of the Count Montorio, and of his mother's indifference.

In the evening Henry retired, after having received the invitation from the Marquis himself to dine with them again the next day, sufficiently pleased at his reception, without taking into consideration that it was due to him from the Marquis, after the service he had rendered the Countess di Simonetta —so much are men disposed to make more consequences of circumstances than they actually possess.

CHAP. XIII.

The Countess di Simonetta discovers the state of her own heart.

As soon as the Countess di Simonetta found herself at liberty to retire to her own room, she seized the opportunity of indulging without reserve the reflections which crowded on her mind. She endeavoured to discover the first motives which influenced the conduct of Henry, who had so generously exerted himself in extricating her from the danger with which she was threatened. What design, what meaning could she attribute to his conduct, except that he was influenced by an extensive and general benevolence to his fellow-creatures? He could not have fallen in love with her face, for that he had not seen; and of her person, as she

was habited, he could not judge with any certainty. She considered therefore that it must have arisen from his natural gallantry: but when she weighed his respectful demeanor at dinner; the elegant and noble turn of mind he evinced on every subject; the manners he exhibited, which distinguished him at once for his dignity and politeness: in a word, when she recollect^{ed} there was a something displayed in his countenance that had an inexpressible power of pleasing, the whole together made an indelible impression on her mind.

The Countess Juliana passed the night ill at ease; her contemplations returned incessantly to the same object; and she had not closed her eyes for more than three hours, when the breakfast was announced. The Countess immediately dressed herself, and was going from her apartment with Signora Ammirato, her attendant, when she heard somebody

knock at the door : it was the Marquis her father. The voice of affection, however, with which he enquired after her health, gave her spirits, and she returned him her thanks in the most graceful and dutiful manner, and endeavoured by every means to convince him that she had now entirely recovered from her indisposition. The Marquis, however, could scarcely believe it possible, and offered his hand for her to descend the stairs. He had noticed at their family party the day before, that her spirits and strength had not returned ; and indeed, every one had retired earlier to their rooms than usual in consequence of her situation.

Arrived in the breakfast-room, the Countess had to answer a variety of enquiries ; how she felt her health, how she had reposed, how she liked the Count St. Florentin, his conversation, his manner, his dress, his deportment, his taste, and intelligence ; but from

which at length she was relieved from a situation painful to her, by the Countess Albici, who kindly proposed a walk on the borders of the canal of La Rosa, under the pretext that the fresh air would be necessary for the re-establishment of her health.

On their return, the Countess Albici conducted her to the door of her room, and said to her, smiling and pressing her hand, “ My dear Countess has not forgotten, I hope, that her Count St. Florentin, her knight errant, dines with the Marquis to-day : I hope that she will recover her natural gaiety and spirits in time to receive him.” A courtesy was the only notice which the Countess Juliana took of the observation ; and she retired to her room blushing, pleased and uneasy, delighted and unhappy.

The young Countess di Simonetta had been guided in all her conduct to-

wards Henry by simple truth and nature ; she was a stranger to every species of art, and to those refinements of coquetry which occasion common beauties with common minds to lose so many hours at the glass : a plain coloured ribband, or a garland of flowers, were generally the only ornaments which the beautiful Juliana wore in her hair, except the diamonds, the gift of the Marquis her father, and generally in less than a quarter of an hour the whole business of her attire was completed.

The Countess had now to dress for dinner, and certainly, however unaffected she was in her appearance, she experienced some difficulty that day how to place a garland of buds of roses in her hair. She had never been so particular before, and Signora Ammirato could not help noticing some alteration in the behaviour of her lady. She was undecided, thoughtful, and

without a consciousness of being so, reserved. A robe of Indian muslin, with white flowers, and a girdle of emerald coloured ribband, completed the dress of the elegant Juliana di Simonetta.

CHAP. XIV.

The result of the dinner at the Palace of the Marquis di Simonetta.

THE Countess Juliana entered the dinner-room with a timid step, and less attentive eyes than those of the ladies present, might have easily discovered the emotions she was endeavouring to suppress, if the general attention had not been fixed on the Count de Barlemont, who was engaged in relating what the Duke de Montferrand, the commander of the forces wherein Henry had served, had told him of the conduct of that young officer while in the army. The Duke, in spite of the insinuations of the Count Montorio, had done justice to the character of Henry St. Florentin, and had represented him equally sensible and brave; nor would he consent to the possibility

even of his having been guilty of the pusilanimous conduct ascribed to him at the dinner given to his brother officers. He allowed that the affair was wrapt up in mystery. The person who had offered him the insult had presented him a sealed paper, which had paralised his whole frame, and prevented him from chastising him on the spot. "I know," said the Duke, "an hundred certain instances of his bravery; and shall not suffer one solitary uncertain fact to the contrary, to weigh more than a feather in the scale."

The young Countess di Simonetta was seated by the side of the Countess di Barlemont, who was using her endeavours to amuse her, when the arrival of Henry was announced. The Marquis, the Count, and all the circle, gave the young St. Florentin the most friendly reception; and the conversation turned naturally on the events of the masked ball. Henry, in the most modest and ingenuous language, made

fresh excuses for the precipitate manner in which he had carried the Countess di Simonetta from the grand saloon, and that too without paying any attention to those in whose company she was at the time.

The Marquis, who began to entertain apprehensions, from the sudden changes which he observed in the countenance of his daughter during the recital, of too great an interest in the affair, endeavoured to give the conversation a turn, when the servant entered to announce that dinner was served.

Henry took the opportunity of presenting his hand to the Countess di Simonetta: "Do you forgive me, Madam," said he, "for presenting myself again officiously, after the trouble which my zeal and impatience has occasioned?" The Countess was incapable of ingratitude. He had attempted with some eagerness to converse again with an object he had begun to love, for love was natural to his years. The answer

of the Countess Juliana was dictated by sensibility and gratitude : it was simply, “ I have only to think of the danger of that night, to call forth every sentiment of the most grateful acknowledgement.”

The Countess di Simonetta being arrived at the dinner saloon, the company were placed ; and the Marquis desired Henry to take his seat opposite his daughter, purposely that he might watch their looks, and detect if any more than a common interest existed on either side.

During dinner, Henry could not cease an instant admiring the beautiful Juliana ; nor did his looks escape her, though her natural modesty and timidity compelled her to cast down her eyes, whenever they met those of St. Florentin.

The Marquis, who was a man of consummate judgment and knowledge of the world, began presently to perceive, with some concern, that too lively an

interest was likely to be created in the minds of his daughter and the Count St. Florentin for each other's happiness ; he very judiciously therefore, after dinner, made a display of some presents sent to him for the Countess Juliana from the Prince Vicentio di Gonzago ; and intimated with considerable importance, the alliance which was likely very shortly to take place ; which conversation he considered would effectually check any presumptuous hopes of St. Florentin, in case he was rash enough to entertain them. The Countess Juliana was silent during this discourse ; she could not help, however, reflecting on the sottish insensibility of Don Vicentio on the night of the ball, and which afforded a striking contrast between him and the active and intrepid St. Florentin, who would have borne her through the flames. The Marquis examined the looks of his daughter, and had sufficient discernment to discover that she had a dislike for the Prince :

he established therefore his resolutions accordingly.

After dinner the carriages were ordered, and the party went to a beautiful palace of the Marquis di Simonetta's, situated two miles without the city of Milan, on the brow of a hill, at the foot of which the river Adda flowed in a pure chrystral stream. The palace was surrounded by a garden, which displayed, in all their varied perfections, the syringas, the yellow jas- mine, the beautiful red valerian, and the sweet-scented province rose, with clusters of lavender and rosemary, while the elegant Spanish reed and the olean- der adorned the banks of the pellucid stream. The road to the palace was bordered on each side by tall planes, with the olive and the date trees ; and the vineyards, seen through their open- ings, presented the scenery of Italy rich in weighty clusters of grapes, and teeming with all the ripe luxuriances of nature.

It was in this delightful retreat that the party indulged themselves, in the recreation of walking along the shaded banks of the Adda. Henry conducted the Countess di Simonetta, and, urged by a passion honourable, though romantic, ventured to take an opportunity of explaining to her, in the most respectful manner, that, since the accident at the masque, his mind had suffered a change which he feared would affect him but too seriously ; that, however presumptuous the avowal, she was the sole object of his admiration ; and that though he could not dare to hope, yet he could not cease to love.

The Countess di Simonetta trembled exceedingly at the unexpected declaration of the young Count ; but had presence of mind and discretion enough to reply, “ Sir, pray suppress these emotions : I have admired your generosity and gallantry, but do not let your ardent imagination lead you to any-thing indiscreet : at present, every thing is

against your hopes, however I might be inclined to favour your pretensions. You will believe I hope that I do not say it from pride, when I repeat, that I am the daughter of the Marquis di Simonetta, and destined by him for an alliance with a prince.

The firmness with which the Countess Juliana pronounced the last words, was followed by a conduct equally wise and prudent, she joined the other ladies, and drew Henry into a general conversation.

CHAP. XV.

The jealousy of Prince Vicentio : his intrigues with Montaltus to ruin Henry St. Florentin.—They determine on exposing him to the allurements of the Lady Victoria di Vicenzia. . . .

IT was not to be expected that the name of the man who had rescued the Countess di Simonetta from the flames, could long remain a secret to the public : it was presently told the Prince Charles, who related the adventure to the Prince Vicentio, both of whom, although they witnessed the circumstance at the time, were ignorant who the parties were. The Prince Vicentio was enraged beyond all description when he heard of the gallantry of St. Florentin, and of his reception and repeated visits since

at the house of the Countess Albici, where the Countess di Simonetta resided.

The Prince Charles, who disliked St. Florentin, advised the Prince Vicentio to consult immediately with Montaltus and the Count Montorio, as to the most effectual means of destroying the reputation of Henry, which advice he followed on the instant.

It may be conjectured that Montaltus, who was the natural enemy of St. Florentin, entered into the views and wishes of the Prince Vicentio. Montaltus was skilled in the knowledge of the world, and advised him to strike at the root at once, by destroying the character of Henry in the mind of the lady herself, which would prevent the growth of a passion that might in the end prove too strong for even parental authority to eradicate. The plan therefore, suggested by the infamous Montaltus, was, that Henry should be in-

vited to the suppers of the Prince Vincentio, and that there he should meet with the Lady Victoria di Vizencia, who would readily join in their schemes, and assist them to the extent of her diabolical abilities.

The Lady Victoria had lost her character completely, and had therefore no means of sustaining an elegant appearance but by her speculations : she was an excellent *intriguante*, and might be trusted while the money bargain was adhered to ; if that failed, there was not any act of revenge or insult of which she was not capable.

The Lady Victoria had the complete arts of fascination and allurement, with a gaiety and freedom that could not fail of pleasing : turned of forty, she possessed that ease and address, which a knowledge of the world alone could bestow, and the young nobles of Milan were all of them happy in her conversation, which was always brilliant and witty.

The first measure of the Lady Victoria was to make the cavalier she might fix on, believe that with him she condescended to be free and unre~~r~~erved ; that he was favoured with her confidence and the possession of her secrets. She would adjust her dress before him, and display more of her charms than strict conduct would allow, as if only to convince him that her's was a platonic mind, that disdained any prudery as unnecessary to virtue.

The Lady Victoria pretended the most sincere and ardent friendships ; she would sigh whenever the term was mentioned, and insisted that she preferred it to love. It was thus she gained many admirers, and acquired an ascendancy on the strength of sentiment, and affected sympathy, that was capable of alluring the ingenuous and unwary to destruction.

The only difficulty was, during her

intrigues, to keep the skilful professor from too liberal a use of the Italian wines ; for when too much indulgence was given her, she always exposed herself, and defeated her own designs : thus it is proved, that when we trust to the abilities of the wicked, we have always to fear that the very incorrectness on which we depend, may be fatal to our views.

At length it was decided, that the Prince Vicentio should affect to be greatly pleased with the conduct of Henry at the masked ball, and that he was desirous of receiving him at the Palace di Gonzago ; that an invitation should be given to a grand supper, at which a full display of beauty should be presented before him ; that the Lady Victoria should be seated next him ; and that she should have complete instructions to allure him by all the fascinations of which she was mistress ; and that when Henry had become

completely entangled in her snares, that then his situation should be represented to the Countess di Simonetta, with such proofs as could not fail of establishing in her mind an utter dislike and contempt for her lover.

CHAP. XVI.

Family pride.—The character of Count Cesar di Simonetta.

THE house of Simonetta was one of the most illustrious of Italy. The Marquis had married when very young to a lady who was beautiful and virtuous, but whom he was unfortunate enough to lose a very few years afterwards. He had considerable estates, although he was not the eldest of the family.

Being a widower at an age when the generality of men begin only to indulge their passions, the tenderness with which he loved the Marchioness, and her solicitude for two children, the offspring of his marriage, determined him to continue single for the remainder of his life. These children were

Count Cesar his son, on his travels, and the Countess Juliana.

The Marquis had a good heart and an accomplished mind ; he was a kind father and friend, brave and generous, elegant and polite, and indeed might have been considered an excellent character, if those virtues and ornaments had not been sullied and obscured by an extraordinary portion of family pride.

The high pretensions of the Marquis di Simonetta had alienated him from all his equals in society ; those even who were united to him in the affinity of blood, and those on whom he had conferred benefits, and to whom gratitude should have been a pleasure, were alike chilled by the grandeur of his deportment, and the haughty reserve which he considered proper for his elevated rank and circumstances in life ; and if a great portion of this pride was not shewn to Henry, it was because he thought him too humble to be an ob-

ject of any apprehension on the score of presumption.

The Marquis di Simonetta, from having raised himself too high for his own happiness, was in danger of experiencing the state of a recluse from the bosom of society, and was frequently obliged to renew and replace his old acquaintance, that he might not be exposed to an humiliating solitude.

Only two persons remained attached to the Marquis di Simonetta, the one was the old tutor Aldus Manutius, to whom he had entrusted the care of his son, the Count Cesar di Simonetta ; and the other, the Count de Barlemont, who had married a relative of the late Marchesina : each of these, though ill-pleased at his loftiness, would not disallow the real goodness of his heart, his munificence, and high sense of honour.

The Marquis, after the death of his lady, had placed his daughter at the convent of our Lady of Mount Carmel,

under the care of an amiable and intelligent woman, whose misfortunes in life had reduced her to indigence, and who, having been recommended by the Countess di Barlemont, was received as a confidential attendant on the Countess di Simonetta, for whom she entertained the most lively affection.

The good old Mentor, to whom the Marquis had entrusted the education of his son, possessed all the requisites for a task of such importance: he was a man of a grave turn of mind, but kind and affectionate: of great knowledge and learning; of mild character, innocently cheerful at times, but never on any occasion compromising virtue for the indulgences of vice. The learned Aldus Manutius had acquired something by his literary labours, which placed him above want; and the simplicity of his diet and dress made him still more independent.

The Count Cesar di Simonetta, until his nineteenth year had always remained

at his father's palace at Vercelli, when his tutor, the good old Manutius, began to form the mind of his pupil, and to instruct him in the knowledge of mankind. It was then deemed by him the proper time for him to travel, that he might have an opportunity of enlarging his understanding, by the mental views that he might take of the works of nature and the history of man.

The Marquis di Simonetta had allowed his son a retinue conformable with his high rank and birth ; and after having ardently recommended him to the care of the sage Aldus Manutius, parted with him as a beloved son, whom he should not see for many years, but with the ardent hope that he should one day meet him again, enriched with the valuable stores of travelled knowledge.

There was one person of whom the young Count Cesar took particular leave, and that happened to be the beautiful Celestina, the sister of Henry

St. Florentin, who was placed in the same convent where was, some years before, the Countess di Simonetta.

The Lady Celestina, who possessed the most pure and unsullied mind, and the kindest disposition that ever adorned the female character, had all the advantages of a finished education given to noviciates of a convent appropriated for the reception of ladies of the highest distinction.

The Count Cesar was equally worthy of praise : he had a mind capable of every noble and manly sentiment ; his figure was good, and his manners possessed all the polish of a finished education : there was however a reserve, and something approaching to despondency in his deportment, which, while it interested, filled the mind of the observer with uneasy sensations, that it should exist in so excellent a character ; either it was a secret malady that preyed on his health, or it was the malady of the spirits, that occasioned him to

droop in the midst of honours and of all the advantages of life.

The Count Cesar di Simonetta was of an age when the heart begins to seek for friendships: he had, as yet, met with little or nothing that could give birth to sentiment, though it was his character to look for objects to bless, to protect, and serve.

It may be imagined that the Count Cesar di Simonetta was not insensible to the chasteness and purity of the heart of the lovely Celestina, nor to the excellence of her understanding; and the similarity of their dispositions often called them into mutual acts of charity and benevolence, and at length produced a sympathy that led to love; the flame however was pure, and derived from reciprocal esteem. These two young lovers found themselves allied, and even betrothed to each other, before they perceived the fatality of the attachment.

The wise and discreet Aldus Manu-

tius had had too much knowledge of life, and experience of the human heart, not to discover what had been going on for some time in the breast of his pupil, and he had urged his departure chiefly with the hope of estranging him from the interesting object of his esteem. The tutor Aldus Manutius was so well acquainted with the character and disposition of the Marquis di Simonetta, that he had not dared to utter a syllable of his suspicions ; he had, however, so much the confidence of his pupil, that he drew the secret from him with ease, and addressed him in a calm and dignified manner : “ Count Cesar, resign yourself to the noblest sentiment of the human mind, forbearance, preferring all privations to the chance even of embittering a parent’s life : frightful and terrible may be the events which may follow the indulgence of a passion which your father would proscribe. It may be true that he carries his family pride to too great an extreme ; yet you must

not espouse any lady without his consent and approbation—for *his* sake, for the sake of the *woman* you love, and for *your own*.

The wise Aldus Manutius carried away the reluctant Count Cesar from the vicinity of Milan, and travelled with him to the North of Europe; while the Marquis his father passed the two first years of his absence in an almost perfect solitude, his pride alienating all those from the palace, who, by their birth, might have claimed an admission to his society; and on his part, he disdained to acknowledge the acquaintance of any who could not boast of at least thirty or more generations of nobility. When at length tired of being always solitary, he began to think that his daughter, the Countess di Simonetta, who resided with Signora Ammirato at a seat of his in the country, was well qualified to be his companion. He was indeed surprised that the idea had not occurred to him sooner;

and he shortly after adopted a measure for his own happiness, from which his pride had excluded him, as social comforts were never considered by him, and which solitary dignity had even extended to his own daughter.

It may be easy to imagine what must have been the anger of the Marquis, when the Countess di Barlemont returned from the mask without his beloved Juliana, and related to him the extraordinary adventure which had separated them at the time of the alarm of fire. He instantly swore that he would take the most ample vengeance on the man who had dared to detain his daughter; and resolved to go immediately in search of her. His friends and attendants however represented to him, that most probably she was carried to the house of some person of distinction; and that at all events, it would be likely that she would be brought home before he could have proceeded any way on his search.

The Marquis was just about dispatching several couriers in different directions, when the intelligence of the safety of the Countess his daughter arrived.

The joy of the Marquis di Simonetta at the arrival of his beloved Juliana, overcame every sentiment of resentment, and it was with a generous and noble frankness that he had offered his friendship to Henry St. Florentin on the full explanation of his conduct.

When the Marquis however met his daughter the next day at dinner, he was struck with the alteration in her countenance ; not a single look, nor a single gesture escaped the keenness of his penetration, and it was not long before his pride took the alarm ; and on further observation he was convinced, almost beyond any doubt, that a mutual attachment had taken place between the Count St. Florentin and his daughter. And in consequence of these suspicions, he immediately formed in his mind some projects for breaking off

the connection, and which were such as were to be expected from his character. He did not know, it is true, that his own son, the Count Cesar di Simonetta, entertained a passion for the sister of the deliverer of his daughter; on the contrary, he had written for his return, to espouse, at the instance of her father, the daughter of the Prince Guastulas, one of the blood royal, and possessed of considerable fortune; but he had received no answer whatever on the subject from the Count, nor from his tutor Aldus Manutius, which made him conclude that his letters must have miscarried.

The Marquis determined to put his plans in force immediately for preventing the growth of a danger arising out of the obligations which Henry had placed him under, and which he conceived might prove of the greatest consequence, as he could not endure the

thought of the bare possibility of an event which would be derogatory to his high and distinguished birth and rank. His ambition had been gratified with the offer made him by the libertine Prince Vicentio, and, regardless of the true happiness of his daughter, determined on the proposed alliance.

CHAP. XVII.

The supper given by the Prince Vicentio, at the Lady Victorias.—The allurements of the wanton and depraved courtezan.—The appearance of the Stranger in the Red Mantle.

THE Count St. Florentin received the commands of the Prince Vicentio to dine with him at the palace, with all the becoming respect due to the heir of the Dukedom of Mantua, although he did not like the principles of that complete libertine ; he hoped however to perform his duty to the Prince, and yet to preserve himself from the contagion with which the palace of Vicentio was filled.

The Count St. Florentin found the Prince most courteous and affable, with an air of levity and debauchery, that, although it shocked and offended at

the first instant, grew pleasing from the liberty it afforded, and its dismissal of all restraint. The Prince affected to like Henry very much ; to be highly pleased with his manners ; and bestowed on him several of those dangerous compliments which a Prince can bestow, where he means to ruin and destroy. He told Henry that he never could consent to his being absent from his parties ; that he must introduce him to the most distinguished for wit and beauty of the ladies of Milan ; and immediately pressed him to go to a supper to be given to the Prince Charles and him, by the Countess Victoria di Vicenzia. Henry, who had the great weakness, which even approaches to a vice, of consenting to every invitation, from the fear of giving pain or offence by a refusal, yielded to the temptation. To know how to refuse, has been justly considered as a perfection of manners, and is understood but by few.

It was too late that Henry, on cool

reflection in his chamber, repented that he had accepted the invitation to accompany the Prince Vicentio to the house of a courtezan : he could not easily get rid of the appointment, as any excuse that he could make would deprive him also of the pleasure of visiting the Countess di Simonetta ; yet Henry, knowing the warmth and gallantry of his own disposition, felt perplexed and unhappy that he should be so situated, and wished the visit well over : his principles were good, but the intoxication of pleasure and wine is too powerful, not to be dreaded by the discreet and wise.

The evening of the supper arrived ; and the Prince Vicentio, in an elegant carriage, called for his new friend, Henry St. Florentin, who was waiting, dressed to considerable advantage.

On their arrival at the house of the Lady Victoria, the Prince Vicentio and Henry were announced, and shewn up a spacious stair-case, into an elegant

saloon, where was presented a display of beauty and splendour. There were present the Ladies Joanella di Brenta, Clementina di Campania, Livia di Modena, and several others ; among the cavaliers were Montaltus, Muscadus, Moscadello, and Margotus, and Henry St. Florentin was received as an addition to their party with every flattering mark of attention. The Lady Victoria was the only one who did not enter into conversation with him ; she was engaged in the contemplation of his face, that she might if possible detect the passions and weaknesses of his mind, and lay her snares accordingly.

The flattering and insinuating address of the Lady Victoria was replete with danger to so ingenuous a character as Henry St. Florentin. She had all the deceitful fascinations of a wanton, with a mind full of artifice and cruelty, regardless how many victims she tempted or destroyed ; her avarice too was extreme, and for money there was no

service of infamy but she would perform, with all the diligence and exultation of a fiend.

At the supper the guests were placed by the Lady Victoria, as had been determined; the Prince Vicentio on her right hand, and the Count St. Florentin on her left, as the Prince Charles was not expected until late in the evening.

The conversation was brilliant and witty, but interspersed with severe and cruel reflections on many of their own party who were absent. The wines of rich flavour, which had been procured for the entertainment of the Princes, and for which they were to pay dearly, was called for repeatedly; and the ladies answered the challenges of their cavaliers without hesitation. Lady Victoria, however, was more prudent than usual; she drank only with the Prince Vicenzio, and the Count St. Florentin, who presently became fascinated with her beauty, manners, and conversation. The artful Victoria enchanted the young

and inexperienced Florentin, by the lovely expressions of a face that could depicture the most ardent friendship and sincerity ; he was presently convinced that she possessed a kind and gentle heart, that had been too susceptible of love, and that the world had done her wrong by considering her depraved. This opinion was confirmed by the artful discourse of the libertine Vincentio, who knew too well that open and barefaced vice would disgust Henry. He spoke of the Lady Victoria in the highest terms, for the warmth and constancy of her friendships ; that she had a kind and liberal heart, and that happy indeed was the man who could make it the depositary of every secret.

The company continued at the table until late, when they separated into the different apartments for the purpose of play, and Lady Victoria engaged the Count St. Florentin at chess. She was not only skilled in that elegant game, but it afforded her numerous opportu-

nities of being witty, and of her displaying the talents of reflection and ridicule to advantage.

The Count St. Florentin was much more accomplished in the game of chess than the Lady Victoria ; but nevertheless he stood no chance with his adversary : she had seated herself as close to him as propriety would admit, and her bewitching glances, from eyes that sparkled with intelligence and wit, fixed his enchantment beyond the hope of reason ever being able to dissolve the spell.

The Lady Victoria and her intended victim, Henry St. Florentin, were closely engaged, Henry's king being in check, when the Prince Charles was announced. Immediately the Lady Victoria went to the door of the room, and his Royal Highness was received by her with an extacy of delight, and respectful homage, which was practiced by all present. The attitudes of the Prince were always elegant ; he bowed and sa-

luted the ladies, and smiled graciously on most of the cavaliers present: he did not, however, pretend to recollect Henry who had never been at court, except on the usual ceremony of his coming of age; but on his being introduced by Prince Vicenzio, the Prince smiled, and assured him of his esteem: he then directed his discourse to the Lady Victoria, and the supper-room became another scene of voluptuousness and excess.

After supper Henry began to feel that he was much more delighted with the unrestrained manners and levities of the agreeable women he had met with, than with all the conversation of the Countess di Barlemont or the Countess Albici; he had not, indeed, made a comparison at that moment between the refined and elegant Juliana di Simonetta and the ladies present; and he was, on the contrary, displeased when her image occurred to his imagination: he suffered already the fever of lust,

and the disgusting picture of licentious depravity was dismissed from his mind; it had now begun to charm.

The Prince Charles retired early, and, as it had been planned, took with him the Prince Vicentio; when at length the artful Victoria managed to keep Henry the last of all her guests. He also would have retired, but she pressed him to taste some excellent wine with her; and they sat down to a table in an adjoining apartment, furnished in all the stile of eastern magnificence. The honest nature of Henry now availed him nothing; it rather occasioned him to yield more readily to the allurements and temptations of one whom he considered the most sensible and best of human beings: her indiscretions, in his judgment, had been from the arts of others, and a proof of her confidence and generous reliance on the honor of man.

The Lady Victoria, however, had had so arduous a task to perform, that,

since the absence of the Princes, considering all danger of a failure at an end, she had partaken rather too freely of the juice of the *Brescian* grape, and was obliged to take an opportunity of pleading a sudden indisposition, which she assured the Count would soon be over. The fact was, she desired a few minutes repose, to dissipate the effects of wine ; but made Henry promise to, amuse himself in her library, until she should return.

Henry was no sooner left alone, than he began to contemplate the scene which had passed, and his own danger : he gave himself up however to the power of the charm, nor struggled to be free ; on the contrary, he waited impatiently for the return of the Lady Victoria, and his imagination pictured afresh all her beauties. At this instant, the figure, *habited in a Red Mantle*, entered the room, and, without speaking a word, beckoned to Henry to follow it. At first Henry would have refused, but the

figure continuing its invitation in an expressive manner, he rose from the couch, and followed it to an adjoining chamber, where it opened a folding-door, when a scene the most disgusting presented itself—it was the Lady Victoria ! her hair dishevelled, the colour of her face smeared, her eyes staring open, even in all the stupor of drunkenness ; her features distorted, and her hand supporting her head on the arm of the couch. The figure in the *Red Mantle* had no sooner displayed the frightful picture to St. Florentin, than it retired, at the same time putting a paper in his hand. Henry was too much engaged and astonished to ask any questions ; and shutting the door, gently returned to the room which he had left. Here he had time to reflect ; and taking the written paper into his hand, read :

“ *A plan is laid—beware of allure-
ment, and of the loss of Juliana !* ”

“ THE STRANGER FRIEND.”

Henry threw himself on the couch, which had the instant before afforded him the luxury of voluptuous reflection, and, awakened from the trance, became instantly alive to every apprehension: he blamed himself for having suffered the Stranger Friend to depart without enquiry as to his conduct and his name; yet he could not help seeing that his happiness and safety were the objects of his interference. Henry had no sooner become convinced of these facts, than he arose, and calling one of the Lady Victoria's servants, desired him to acquaint his Lady when she came down, that he was compelled to go, but that he would have the pleasure of paying her a visit very shortly; and with this message, happy and elated at his emancipation from her power, he left the house of the enchantress.

The Lady Victoria had not indulged more than a quarter of an hour, when she awoke, and rang for her attendant

to replace her hair and drapery with new attraction and grace ; and composing her face to a sweet and fascinating loveliness, she descended to the apartment where she had left St. Florentin.

There was not any thing that could exceed the rage and disappointment of the Lady Victoria when she found her destined victim was gone. The anger described of Calypso at the departure of Telemachus, was nothing to equal it ; she paraded the room in the greatest agitation, and filled glass after glass of wine, until frantic and in a fever from vexation, 'she became exhausted, and was carried by her servants to her bed insensible, and transformed from beauty to a loathsome and disgusting object.

CHAP. XVIII.

The projects of Power. — The Great often unjust.

THE next day the Lady Victoria endeavoured to restore her influence with Henry, by an invitation for him to dine with her, without any other company, but to which he had the prudence to send excuses. The artful generally discover when their ingenuity has failed, and the Lady Victoria saw that her power was at an end : she drove, therefore, to the Prince Vicentio, and explained to him the ill success which had attended their scheme. The Prince, who had left the supper in exultation at his scheme, did not hesitate to reproach her, and she recriminated, which is always the result of a failure among the wicked—they either mutually flatter or curse each other.

The Prince Vicentio more determined, and certain in his contrivances, hastened instantly to Montaltus, who advised him to see the Prince Charles, but who had not risen, and could not be disturbed. The Prince Charles beside had a great aversion to consultation, he was fond of ease and pleasure, nor would willingly attend to any thing that was likely to give trouble or reflection.

On the Prince Vicentio's return to Montaltus, it was agreed that the Prince should see the Marquis di Simonetta, and insinuate that Henry entertained presumptuous hopes of an alliance with his daughter, from the mere circumstance of his having been of service to her in a moment of danger, and that many others, and himself among the rest, were ready to have assisted her on that occasion if Henry had not rudely pressed forwad.

The Marquis di Simonetta, in the mean time, who would have consi-

dered it an heinous crime for any one less than of an exalted rank to pretend to the hand of his daughter, had no sooner entertained the impression that Henry had hopes of the alliance, than he immediately begun to have a serious aversion to him, yet as he had received him at his table, and given him a general invitation, he could not consistently with the acknowledged rules of hospitality forbid him his house; besides the affair had obtained publicity, and it would have looked extraordinary, and ungrateful. The proud Marquis di Simonetta could not bear the thought of being accused of ingratitude—the Marquis di Simonetta ungrateful!!!—and to a youth scarcely known in the Court of Milan. “Ah,” cried he, “to what a state of humiliation has my daughter reduced me.” The Marquis considered the circumstances over and over again in his mind, a considerable time, before any plan suggested itself, that could relieve him.

from his embarrassment. At length a project occurred that appeared to have some probability, and which was flattering to the ideas of munificence and gratitude which the Marquis desired to entertain.

The project which had occurred to the Marquis, was to serve Henry with his influence, and to procure him the command of a troop, which would be shortly ordered to quit Italy on service. This project was no sooner formed, than with an artifice unbecoming of a noble mind, he took an opportunity one day to intimate his wish to Henry, that he should again bear arms, and that his interest should not be wanting, to raise him to a rank seldom bestowed but on persons of the first families in Milan.

Henry St. Florentin, who was entirely unsuspecting in his nature, did not see the drift of the Marquis's conversation, and in the warmest terms expressed his gratitude, and even shewed impatience to seize the opportunity of

profiting by his patron's liberality and condescension.

The difficulty of Henry's going again into the army, without clearing up his character, as to the circumstance of the insult offered him by the Stranger in the Red Mantle, was removed by the Marquis advising him, on the slightest allusion, to challenge the man who might be bold enough to venture to recur to it; and that advice was partly given from his own feelings, though such was his pride and his aversion to any thing like an alliance with so humble a person as Henry St. Florentin, that with such a feeling he would have even persuaded him to the measure of resentment, from the possibility of his falling in the contest. It is true that the Marquis would have disdained the acknowledgment of such a motive to himself, but it certainly did occur to his mind, and helped to determine his conduct.

In consequence of the conversation

of the Marquis with Henry, and that nothing might be left undone that could give a specious colour to his plans, he went immediately to the Count di Bar-lemont's, and requested that nobleman to accompany him to the Duke de Montferrand his friend, who happened to be at Milan.

In his way to the Duke de Montferrand the Marquis explained to the Count the views he had for Henry's advancement, in return for the prompt assistance he had afforded his daughter. The Count highly approved of the intentions of the Marquis, and paid him a number of compliments on his munificence and liberality.

When arrived at the palace of the Duke de Montferrand the Marquis was received by his illustrious friend with every mark of kindness and favour, and after repeating the great esteem and regard which he had for the Marquis di Simonetta, he entreated to know how he might be serviceable to his interests.

The Marquis, with great formality and an affectation of sensibility, related the obligations which he was under to the youth Henry St. Florentin, as he called him ; and expressed his wishes of obtaining for him the command of a troop, until that he could procure him from Prince Charles, something more considerable. " I wish," said he, " to serve this young cavalier, and mean that he should see service abroad ; and so raise himself by his merit, as well as the influence of his friends, to high and distinguished rank."

The Duke de Montferrand, who had entertained a favorable opinion of Henry, was pleased to find that he had gained so great and powerful a friend ; and promised that in a few days he should have the desired appointment.

The Marquis was delighted with the success of his expedient, and requested the Count di Barlemont not to speak of their intentions to Henry, that he himself might have the pleasure of disclos-

ing such an important piece of intelligence.

Thus did the Marquis di Simonetta imagine that he had done every thing that ought to be done to satisfy the demands of gratitude and honor ; and that he was, from that instant, free from the obligation to which the unfortunate accident of the mask had subjected him: so easily does the mind become satisfied when it is important to its interests or happiness to become so, without ever taking into consideration that Providence may refuse to sanction the best planned contrivances of the wisest head.

CHAP. XIX.

Henry appears to advantage, and is engaged in a scene, that promises to produce him more real pleasure, than he received from his entertainment at the supper of the Lady Victoria.—The Stranger Friend.

HENRY ST. FLORENTIN, who was not informed of the measures which had been taking for his advancement, was occupied in his contemplations on the lovely object of his admiration and esteem. His thoughts were constantly on his beautiful and interesting Juliana, and he suffered himself continually to paint scenes of happiness that might never arrive, and scenes of despair and disappointment, more probable to happen in the scale of incidents, but as useless to indulge in prospect—so much does love encourage and torment by turns. The enchanting image of the

lovely Juliana was continually before his eyes, and he never suffered a day to pass, without calling to enquire after the health of the Countess di Simonetta; for Henry having once had the introduction to the Palace of the Marquis, every other place was open to him, and he almost always contrived to be of the same parties with the lady who was necessary to his happiness.

The Countess di Simonetta, on her part, could not fail of noticing the attentions of Henry; and was so much flattered and pleased by them, that a regard for him insinuated itself deeper and deeper into her heart, and occasioned her to feel all the anxieties of love without her having the courage to confess to herself that she really entertained the passion.

The young Countess di Simonetta did not possess any of the pride of her father; she was not insensible to the consequence and advantages attached to

high rank, but, after having established in her mind, that her lover was a cavalier of ancient family, and possessed of almost every virtue of the human heart, and excellency of understanding, she could not think that the alliance could disgrace her, and, although the Count St. Florentin was not immensely rich, yet he was without debts or incumbrances, and his mind free from the dangerous propensities of luxury and extravagance: how good a heart Henry really possessed, was displayed in an occurrence which happened shortly after.

One morning Henry, according to his usual custom, paid his visit at the house of the Countess Albici, to make his enquiries after the health of the Countess di Simonetta; when the servants informed him, that the ladies were taking an airing in the carriage, and that the Marquis and the Count de Barlemon were gone to Montferraud. Henry, a little disappointed at this intelligence, and not knowing which road

the coach had taken, chose a solitary walk on the banks of the canal of La Rosa, to indulge the melancholy disposition of mind that overpowered him.

Henry had scarcely arrived to a narrow street leading to the canal, when he saw a vast number of persons collected together, and stopped his horse, fearing that if he advanced further he should trample on some of the crowd. Henry, however, enquired the reason of such a mob, which had all the appearance of a tumult. "Ah, Sir," cried one of them who was standing at his door, "a poor unfortunate woman is the cause of all this disturbance;" "some dreadful accident I am afraid then," interrupted Henry, "has happened to her; is she hurt?" "Only in mind and estate, Sir," continued the poor man, "and those are both as bad as they can be. If you knew her story you would not wonder to see so many of the neighbours ready to take her part." Aye, Sir, they would go great lengths

for her, but she is too good to allow them to do so ; she will not suffer them to interfere to prevent the due course of the law." "Pray tell me, Sir," cried Henry, "for I do not exactly comprehend you, what has happened then so bad to this poor woman?" "Ah, many misfortunes, Sir," replied the man, "one after another. She is a poor woman, and has six helpless children ; she lost her husband after he had been confined more than twelvemonths to his bed ; since his death she was delivered of her sixth child. Misfortunes follow, as you may say, one on the heel of another, so that the expence of interring her husband decently, and of her lying-in, swallowed up the whole of the little money which she had left ; when her landlord, a hard-hearted man, would not allow her any time to pay him half a year's rent which she was indebted to him. Fifteen days have now elapsed since he told her, with the greatest brutality, that, if she did not satisfy him in

a few days, he would seize on all the little furniture which she had, and put her in prison; and he has kept his word, for this very day the bailiffs from this cruel landlord have surrounded the house of this poor widow, and have seized even the cradle of the poor little infant she gives suck to; and the neighbours, being informed of what had taken place, assembled immediately together, and would probably have driven out the bailiffs, or perhaps have killed them, if the good creature had not insisted that they should run no such hazard on her account."

" You can have no notion, sir," continued the poor man, who had remarked the attention Henry seemed to shew, and the interest he took in the narrative, " how much this poor woman is beloved; and she well deserves it! When her circumstances were better she no sooner heard of any of her poor neighbours being sick, than she hastened to assist them, and to furnish them with

all the little comforts in her power ; and would even, in some cases, neglect the management of her own concerns to nurse them and see them out of their distress. During the lifetime of her husband, who was an industrious gardener of good business, she was as happy as could be ; but the poor man lay sick a long time, and one expence succeeded another so as to leave her nothing in her necessity ; but she always relied on providence, which, she said, was full of power and goodness, and would never suffer her children to want."

Henry was affected even to tears, and dismounted. "Conduct me", said he with an animated voice, "immediately to the cottage of this excellent woman, who deserves to have a palace to live in, rather than a prison, and ought to find protection in all those who presume to think that they possess humanity."

Henry St. Florentin's deportment displayed unconsciously to him the sen-

sibility of his heart ; his eyes filled at the same instant with the fire of resentment, and the tears which flowed from compassion ; and he appeared to the surrounding multitude as a Prince, or rather as an Angel arrived to the assistance of the unhappy widow ; and, impressed with an idea of his munificence and power, they imperceptibly made way for one, whom they already regarded as the saviour of the unfortunate.

Presently, Henry arrived at the habitation of misery, and which but a few months past had been the mansion of conjugal peace and affection ; a little palace, rich in all the blessings of health and independence. It was yet neat and clean, in spite, as it were, of the work of illness and of death. The havoc of law, however, had displaced every little article of furniture ; and the scene of confusion and desolation had commenced.

Henry St. Florentin found the interesting widow, of whom he had heard

so much, surrounded by her children, who were all in tears, while she was engaged endeavouring to appease their anguish with every endearing mark of love and tenderness. Henry found also in the room two of those wretches who debase the name of man, by the cruel and wanton exercise of their power, extending duty to oppression, and necessity to insult. These were proceeding to take an inventory of the effects, with an unfeeling composure that would even have excited the indignation of a savage ; they even sneered at the enquiries of the poor woman, who knew not how to act, or what to do ; and abused grossly the neighbours, who in kindness to the widow ventured to ask them questions.

Henry, mute with astonishment and horror, was for some time incapable of addressing the ministers of the vengeance of the law. At length he summoned spirit sufficient to speak to them : "How much," cried he to one of them, " doe

this poor womans arrear of rent amount to?" "I should like to know very much," cried the bailiff in a surly tone, "why you interfere," at the same time continuing the work of depredation, without even deigning to cast his eyes on the person who was addressing him. Henry repeated the question. "You are mighty curious friend," returned the other man, "but pray what is it to you what the woman owes? I dare say that you will not pay the money for her." Henry, indignant at the last observation, of which he felt the full force, being literally without anything but a few pieces in his purse; stood in need of all his moderation to restrain himself from giving the wretch the chastisement he deserved. He was, indeed, at a loss what to do; he had asked the question prematurely, and his conduct appeared idle and officious even to himself, when he reflected on his incapacity, and that he was a stranger. The poor woman was looking on, and

observed to Henry that she had made the same enquiry but with no success.

Henry now offered to give them an order for the amount on his steward, but they only insulted him afresh, by asking if they could depend on his being really the person he represented himself to be ; and, at length, flatly refused to give him the information that he desired.

Henry St. Florentin's pride had by this time got over the vulgar insolence of the bailiff's, and he could not help smiling at their impertinences ; but was in great agitation of mind, how he should relieve the poor widow, for they were now busily employed in packing up the little furniture ; and one of the wretches, determined on having an account of every thing, took the poor little infant with his rude hands from the cradle, and laid it roughly on the floor, before the mother saw what he was about, and who ran to its assistance with a look of anguish and her eyes

full of tears. Henry was in the act of throttling the miscreant, when a loud knocking at the door attracted his attention, and he was willing to see the result, when the figure *habited in the Red Mantle* entered the House. Every one was silent as it approached, and Henry recognized the mysterious stranger. “Who is the man,” cried the figure *in the Red Mantle*, *in a mild but firm tone*, “and where are his myrmidons who would go beyond the law?” Henry St. Florentin related the story in a few words; and, with his accustomed candour and frankness, explained the circumstance of his own incapacity at that moment to discharge the demand: “But, sir,” cried he to the stranger, “I will pledge my honor that the amount shall be paid before the evening may arrive, if these men will be satisfied.” “There is no occasion for that pledge,” said the stranger gently; when he turned to the bailiffs, and, addressing them, said: “Go from hence, and leave this

poor dejected woman some respite from your barbarity.” The elder bailiff, however, did not seem at all inclined to obey this mandate ; when the extraordinary personage in the Red Mantle gave a loud hem, and three men burst open the door, one of whom Henry recollects to be the very captain he had seen at the house in the court, the night of the fire at the masked ball. “ *Dismiss these men,*” *said the stranger to him.* On which he took the elder of the bailiffs aside, and Henry was astonished when he observed the bailiff tremble, and bow humbly to the ground, after which he and his companions retired precipitately. The captain and his people followed, and the stranger, who had taken the child of the widow in his arms and kissed it, was retiring to the door ; when Henry said : “ Sir, let me entreat you to tell me who it is who is ever thus constantly at hand, to save me in extremity and to further the most ardent wishes of my

heart."— "*Peace,*" interrupted the Stranger, "you must not enquire further, nor know me as any other than the Stranger Friend." With these words he retired towards the door, waving his hand for Henry to desist from following.

Both Henry and the poor woman remained for a considerable time mute with astonishment, and the first word which he spoke was to ask if she knew the stranger. "Indeed, sir," said she, "I do not ; although I recollect having seen him before, once when a muleteer was cruelly beating one of his mules, and this cavalier had him taken to prison, but who he is I have never been able to learn." Henry made many enquiries of the by-standers at the door, but not any of them could give the desired intelligence. The good widow now paid all her compliments to Henry, and threw herself on her knees, calling him her first and kindest benefactor. Henry raised her from the ground and

next the children came round him, to bless the good stranger with their infant prayers. Henry gave the poor woman all the pieces which he had in his purse, and distributed some smaller ones among the little cottagers, whose faces were turned from mourning to rejoicings.

Henry promised to see the family again in the evening, and remounted his horse, (which had by this time been led nearer to the door) amidst the acclamations of the people, who considered him as the Saviour of the poor woman; for of the stranger friend they knew nothing, that person was almost covered in the Red Mantle, and had passed through the croud without particular observation.

Henry did not visit the walk on the banks of the canal La Rosa, as he had intended, his mind was too much occupied with reflection on the scene he had just witnessed, and the remarkable ap-

pearance of the Stranger Friend. Henry therefore returned towards the house of the Countess Albici, that he might have an opportunity of seeing if the ladies had returned, and of interesting them in behalf of the poor widow.

CHAP. XX.

The mutual Narration.—The Present.

ON Henry's return to the house of the Countess Albici, he found the carriage with the ladies at the door, and rode up to them to pay his compliments. “ I wished to have seen you sooner,” said he, “ to interest you in behalf of a poor widow, who I met with by chance this morning. “ Indeed,” interrupted the young Countess di Simonetta, more animated than he had ever seen her, “ I am afraid that your poor widow will stand but little chance of notice just now, for we are occupied in considering how we can serve a poor widow also, who we have seen by chance.”—“ And where pray madam, does she live ?” cried Henry. “ I'll tell you,” replied the Countess di Simonetta. “ On our return from our ride, as we were

crossing the end of one of the streets, we were surprised to see a great concourse of people assembled, and our coachman was just going to turn up another lane, when we ordered him to stop, and the servants to enquire the cause of the tumult. At this moment a figure in a Red Mantle, muffled up even to the very eyes, came to the door of the carriage, and accosted us in a very familiar way, in a voice I think that I have heard somewhere, with the remarkable words : “*Forsake not the wretched.*” I was just on the point of entreating the stranger, who seemed of the most elegant deportment, to make us acquainted with his name, when he disappeared in a moment, and the servant returned with a dismal account that all the little property of a poor widow, left with six small children, had been mercilessly seized by the landlord ; but that a young gentleman on horseback had arrived at the time and sent the bailiff’s out of the house. Good

creature ! I could kiss him if I knew where to find him.” Henry reddened at this instance of regard to a stranger, and felt uneasy, when the Countess continued : We drove to the poor woman’s and found her considerably relieved in mind, so we made the children a small present and came from her home, our minds full of business how we could best serve her ; and now, Count, tell us where your poor widow lives that we may go to see her next.”—

“ It is no matter now, Madam,” said Henry, “ she is not in want.”—“ Why how is that to be reconciled with what you told us just now ? ” interrupted the Countess di Barlemont. “ I understood that you wanted to find her friends ; come, we can have time to go thither before dinner.” Henry found himself urged to extremities, he blushed, and pleading the necessity of his going home to write some letters, made a low bow, and left the ladies astonished at his behaviour. “ It is evident,” said the Coun-

Countess di Barlemont, "that Henry St. Florentin is himself the person who assisted our poor widow, and the object of our compassion was *his*," — "Yes," cried the Countess di Barlemont, "and he well deserves the kiss promised to that gallant stranger by our friend." The Countess di Simonetta blushed in her turn at this delicate raillery, and her love for Henry became only more apparent by her attempt to conceal it.

The Marquis di Simonetta and the Count di Barlemont returned in the evening, after having settled the business that carried them to the Duke.

The Countess Albici was so eager to relate to the Marquis the adventures of the morning, that she seized the first opportunity of displaying the generosity of Henry, and of displaying his conduct in the most amiable light. "His generosity is so much the greater," said the Countess di Barlemont, "as we know he is not very rich at present; he does not wish to deprive his mother of

any part of the establishment to which she had been accustomed in the lifetime of the Count St. Florentin.

The Marquis di Simonetta, who felt an uneasy sensation reflected for the instant, and perceiving that they waited in silence for his opinion of the action, said in a grave tone: "*Certainly this young cavalier has the mind of a gentleman; his conduct to this unfortunate woman would do honor even to our first nobility, if it were not guided by any motives of personal interest.*" A sigh escaped the Countess di Simonetta at a reflection so full of injustice to Henry St. Florentin; when the Countess di Barlemont, who esteemed Henry almost as much as the generous Juliana, would not yield to the cool argument of the Marquis, but was happy to be favoured with such an opportunity of praising Henry, and of humiliating the arrogance of her proud relative, who made several sarcastic observations on the young Count's heroism.

The Marquis di Simonetta retired to his apartment, as much dissatisfied however with himself, as the Countess di Barlemont could possibly wish him to be.

The Marquis suffered for the triumph which his pride had obtained over sensibility, and reproached himself for having hesitated to praise an action which his heart told him was truly meritorious. It was not in his power to disapprove the sentiments which a conduct so noble and generous could not fail to create in the mind of his daughter; but he consoled and applauded his ingenuity for having uttered several expressions that probably might have some effect on her mind, and in some degree counteract her sentiments in Henry's favor. However, as the first principles of his character were founded on rectitude, he could not help reflecting that his conduct might truly be taxed with injustice, and sought

means of acquitting himself in such a manner that his own feelings should not reproach him ; he recollect ed that the Countess di Barlemont had said that Henry was not rich, as he had never suffered his mother's income to be lessened on his account since the death of his father ; and the Marquis, struck with that idea, thought that he ought to do him a service beyond the selfish act which procured him his promotion. His heart was certainly capable of every noble sentiment when the absurd feelings of his family pride were absent.

The Marquis having resolved to send a sum of money to Henry, studied to devise some means of conveying a present to him secretly.

An anonymous letter appeared an expedient that would answer the purpose, but if he wrote it himself it would lead to a discovery which he was anxious to avoid. His secretary who came into the room at the moment, seemed to be the most proper person

to remove the difficulty ; he therefore desired him to write the letter which he dictated :

“ Sir,

“ One who applauds your conduct, to the unfortunate, begs you to accept the enclosed, which may enable a generous mind to extend its benevolence to the unfortunate.—Spare yourself the ineffectual task of endeavouring to discover from whom you receive this, be assured the attempt will be vain.”

The Marquis di Simonetta the next morning desired his Steward to fill two bags with gold, and placed the letter in the mouth of one of them, when he ordered him to find some poor peasant who he could trust, to carry them to Henry’s lodgings.

CHAP. XXI.

The Interview of the Prince Vicentio with the Marquis di Simonetta and the Countess Juliana.—The Prince makes insurmountable difficulties to his own designs.—The Prince Charles interferes at the solicitation of the Marchioness Amphilesia di Medicis.

THE Prince Vicentio made his promised visit to the Marquis di Simonetta, who he found in his study, at leisure to hear all that he had to say, and he began with great asperity and harshness against Henry St. Florentin, who he represented to the Marquis as a daring and presumptuous boy, who looked forward to the attainment of the hand of the Lady Juliana, and that he had already made considerable progress in his plans. The Marquis smiled at the insinuations of the Prince, and assured

him that he must have been misinformed. "It is not likely," said he, "that a man of a family by no means an ancient one, and who holds but a moderate rank in life should entertain so absurd a hope. Indeed," said he, "I have evidence that such ridiculous ideas do not enter into his head." The Marquis then related to the Prince the expedient he had adopted for getting rid of the obligation he was under to Henry and of him together, with which the Prince was very much pleased.

The Marquis took an opportunity of sending for the Countess Juliana, who was desired to entertain the Prince while her father wrote a dispatch; and she endeavoured to perform that duty with all the elegance of deportment and propriety of which she was capable. The Prince Vicentio was in high spirits, and said a variety of gay and pleasant things; in which discourse he could not resist, however, making a display of his principles of libertinism, and ridi-

culed every serious and sacred subject. Among other things he did not disguise his sentiments on the practice of assassination ; as he assured her that if any man presumed to step between him and the hopes of his alliance with the beautiful and illustrious daughter of the house of Simonetta, he should not hesitate to employ his favorite bravoes to destroy him. The generous and tender Juliana shuddered as the Prince Vicentio uttered with an air of triumph his unmanly threats. She was, however, too much offended to reason with such a monster : the part she took was decisive—it embraced the full resolution of dying sooner than bestow her hand on a wretch like the Prince ; and to that end she breathed a fervent vow to Heaven, while the base Vicentio endeavoured to please her with his gallantry and his wit.

Happily for the Lady Juliana, the Marquis returned, and his entrance put an end to the disgusting conversation

of the Prince. The proud Marquis made a parade before his daughter of the great condescension of the Prince Vicentio in the proposed alliance, to which the Countess replied that, as yet she had entertained no thought of the marriage state, that it required great consideration, and that she believed that she should prefer the peaceful enjoyment of her retirement to all the splendours that the Prince's munificence could bestow.

The Marquis, in an ill-timed vein of satire endeavoured to ridicule the Countess's love of solitude, and painted the distinguished honors of royalty in terms much too complimentary to the Prince, and too far from truth to have any effect on the well instructed mind of the Countess di Simonetta.

It was thus that the arrogant and haughty Vicentio, full of his own importance, and with a display which he thought would charm away and destroy the reflection of the Countess, only awa-

kened or created in her mind fresh fears and doubts fatal to his schemes, and which made her draw comparisons between him and the noble Henry St. Florentin, by no means favorable to the royal libertine.

The Prince Vicentio, returning to his Palace, reflected on the conversation which had passed between the Countess and himself; and then, for the first time, began to entertain apprehensions that he had gone too far in the avowal of his principles and gallantries, to which his vanity had led him, and which his art and judgment could not approve. The Prince grew restless and impatient as he recurred to the mistakes of his interview, and ordered his carriage in haste, to go to the Countess di Medicis, who he knew had an entire influence over the Prince Charles.

The Prince Vicentio found the Marchesina Amphilisia alone, waiting to receive her royal guest, and, after a few minutes conversation, entreated her to

favor his views, and to obtain a promise from the Prince Charles that the royal consent should never be given for the espousal of the Countess di Simonetta to any other person than himself, during his life. The Marchesina di Medicis, on her part, claimed a promise that Prince Vicentio should early make her acquainted with the slightest alteration or change in the sentiments of the Prince for her, and with the name of any rival who he might conjecture would presume to hope the favor of his protection; all which business of a spy the base Vicentio promised to perform; and in return for which the interested Amphilia engaged to procure the royal word so gratifying to his hopes, and so fatal to those of the hnmble St. Florentin.

CHAP. XVIII.

The pleasures and advantages of Virtue, and the miseries of Vice, exemplified in the persons of the Prince Vicentio and Henry St. Florentin.

THE Countryman entrusted with the money, performed his errand faithfully, and after having left the bags at the Count Florentin's lodgings, was out of sight in a moment.

Henry, whose noble sentiments were equally remote from either haughty pride or arrogant meanness, recoiled at the idea of receiving the anonymous letter. "It cannot be the Stranger Friend," said he, "who has done this, for by his deportment, he was not likely to suspect me capable of accepting money as the recompense of an action to which could be attached no particular merit, and which ought only to be

considered as the natural effect of that humanity and general benevolence, always due to our fellow-creatures in distress."

Henry St. Florentin reflected a considerable time before he could decide in what manner he should act on the occasion ; to return the money was impossible, as there was not the slightest trace by which the donor could be found. He made up his mind therefore, to employ agreeable to the intentions of him who had bestowed it, and determined that a portion of it should be applied to the re-establishment of the poor widow, and that the remaining part should be reserved for the relief of other unfortunate objects which might afterwards meet his observation.

Pleased with the determinations of a good mind, Henry put forty pieces of gold into his purse, and left home for the purpose of visiting the poor widow and her family, rejoicing as he went, on the change that he should be able to

produce, and the power which he had of performing what might appear a miracle.

On arriving near the house of the poor woman, Henry heard the sound of voices, engaged, as he thought, in earnest conversation; and fearing that some new disaster had happened, hesitated a moment at the door before he would enter; but how exquisitely affected were the feelings of St. Florentin, when he distinguished that what he had taken for earnest discourse, were the earnest prayers from the grateful lips of the poor widow and her little family, for his own happiness.

Ye, of the gay and licentious, who call passing *useless* days and *distracted* nights, pleasure, who recline in the dangerous lap of luxury and voluptuousness, until the health and intellect decay, whose imaginations are polluted with sensual pictures which occupy the space which ought to include reflections of sober truths and virtue, try to change

the wretched habits of your life, taste of purer pleasures, the greater felicities of more virtuous minds, engage yourselves at times in doing good, in solacing and assuaging the sufferings of the distress ; think of the good consequence, and imagine, if you can, a moment of more self gratification than that which was felt by the generous Henry St. Florentin when he opened the door of the widow's cottage, and saw the groupe lifting up their hands to heaven, entreating the Almighty to bless their benefactor.

The good mind is free from the eternal misery of self-reproach, which disturbs and destroys the comforts of life, which breaks in on the moments of festivity, and dashes the full cup of pleasure from our lips, or artfully contrives to mix a poison with the luscious draught,—a self-reproach, which lives as long as we live, until its victim becomes so depressed and debased, that the energies of virtue end.

Such was the period to which the

Prince Charles was hastening, in spite of all the calls that were made on pleasure and dissipation to sustain his spirits: the Prince Vicentio was not so wretched, for his hardened and polluted heart had long rendered him insensible to the sentiments of a man; he was already lost. The Prince Charles, not so depraved, was at times susceptible of good desires, although he lay from hour to hour, wallowing in the wanton lap of voluptuousness, and unable to shake off the sloth which had enslaved his body and mind, and left him almost in a mere stupor of existence.

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